UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN THE INNER CITY OF ACCRA: EXPLORING CHOICE, EXPERIENCES, AND ASPIRATIONS

BY

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and it has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

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Dedication

This thesis is a letter to my late great grandmother, Akosua Nyanta, grandmother, Afia Ode, and mother, Mary Takyiwaa who never had any education, but thought me to reach greater heights through education.

To my husband Dr Anthony Yaw Baah, and children – Fidelia, Anthony, and Kofi – for being my inspiration throughout this thesis, and the pride they take in my achievements. Also, to my honorary daughter, Hannah Sam, for all her support.

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List of acronyms

ABFA	Annual Budget Funding Account
AMA	Accra Metropolitan Assembly
APEC	Affordable Private Education Centres
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CGS	Capitation Grant Scheme
CREATE	Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity
DFID	Department for International Development
EFA	Education For All
EI	Education International
ESP	Education Strategic Plans
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GES	Ghana Education Service
GETFund	Ghana Education Trust Fund
GoG	Government of Ghana
GHDS	Ghana Health and Demographic Survey
GHS	Ghana Cedi
GLSS	Ghana Living Standard Survey
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GSDO	Ghana Social Development Outlook
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGF	Internally Generated Funds
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
ISSER	Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research
JHS	Junior High School
KG	Kindergarten

LFPS	Low-Fee Private Schools
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MMR	Mixed Methods Research
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOESS	Ministry of Education, Science and Sports
NAT	National Assessment Tests
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RQ	Research Question
SHS	Senior High School
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TV	Television
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WAEC	West African Examination Council

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Topic: Government and private schools in the inner city of Accra: Exploring choice, experiences, and aspirations.

Abstract

Recent evidence from Ghana points to significant pro-low-fee private school bias among inner-city households due to perceived failings of government schools. This raises three important questions: What kind of households enrol their children in government and private schools? Are the rich more likely to access private schools than poorer households? Do low-fee private school children enjoy better schooling experiences and higher aspirations on average than their government school counterparts? By asking these questions, this thesis critically examines what determines inner-city households' schooling access/choice. It also explores the differential schooling experiences and aspirations of children who enrol in government or private schools. It makes four important contributions to the existing literature. Firstly, this study is one of the few studies in Ghana that investigates the relative schooling choice, experiences, and aspirations of households accessing private or government schools. Secondly, unlike previous studies, this study focuses on children in transition from grade six to Junior High School (JHS) and from JHS three to Senior High School (SHS). Thirdly, it utilises several variables that are normally unobserved by researchers in this field in comparing government and private schools.

The study is based on a survey of 754 students and in-depth interviews with eight head teachers, 11 parents, a circuit supervisor, and a politician (assemblyman). Quantitative methods are used to examine associations between access, individual and household characteristics, experiences, and schooling aspiration. Qualitative methods are used to explain the quantitative results. The findings reveal that disadvantaged children, such as overaged children, are more likely to enrol in government schools, so government schools are the last resort for disadvantaged households. Government schools are also found to provide better teaching/learning experiences and overall schooling experiences than private schools. Overaged children and boys are more likely to have lower schooling experiences irrespective of the type of school they attend.

Children from both government and private schools and all backgrounds expected social and economic returns from education in equal measure, although private school children are more likely to aspire to professional carriers. They are also aware of barriers to achieving their carrier aspirations, but they have strategies in place that could help them achieve their career goals. The study argues that the achievement of SDG 4 for every child depends on the improvements in children's schooling access and experiences, especially, among disadvantaged children. If we only focus on enrolments, inputs, and effectiveness which are easily measurable, then we are largely devaluing key school process and experience variables. This limitation must be acknowledged because access without positive schooling experiences will not make educational rights a reality for marginalised children. While school experience and process variables might be difficult to capture and measure, they are particularly important and serve as means by which disadvantage can be spotted and dealt with.

Chapter 1: Introduction and overview of the study

1.1 Introduction

Education continues to be a measure of and condition for social development (ISSER, 2012). However, despite improvements over the past decade, most children living in urban areas are still far from realising their fundamental human right of universal basic education (UNESCO, 2014). There are significant challenges, ranging from inadequate free schooling places to deficiencies in the education system (Rolleston, 2009), that contribute to a learning crisis which needs urgent attention (UNESCO, 2014). In line with this notion of a learning crisis, Rolleston (2009) points to a situation where a much larger group of Ghanaian children receive incomplete basic education which provides a foundation for wider human flourishing. Policymakers in Sub Saharan Africa and researchers have not yet come to grips with the implications of the learning crisis on children's capability.

Educational deprivation still tends to be primarily a rural problem, especially in an agricultural economy such as Ghana's (Akaguri, 2011). More significant inequity exists, and completion of Junior High School (JHS) remains the preserve of households and areas of relative economic privilege. Relatively little is known about educational choices of inner-city households, what schooling experiences they expect to enjoy once they are registered in schools, and whether these schooling experiences will help them achieve their future aspirations.

This thesis focuses on the inner city of Accra, Ghana. It outlines the basis of a different approach to the study of school management types in developing countries, which accounts for choices, experiences, and aspirations. Over the past few decades, studies have publicised findings that suggest an increase in private schools in disadvantaged areas in sub-Saharan African countries, including Ghana (Dixon et al., 2017; Dixon et al., 2015; Härmä, 2015; Akyeampong and Rolleston, 2013; Dixon, 2013; Stern and Heyneman, 2013; Akaguri, 2011; Rose, 2009; Walford and Srivastava, 2007; Tooley et al. 2005). For example, Dixon et al. (2017) found only 9 percent of the schools in their study in Lagos state to be government owned. With fewer government schools in these countries, many parents have no choice but to enrol their children in a fee-paying school.

There is also a paucity of research regarding schooling choice in the context of the developing world (Day Ashley et al., 2014), although several studies of household choice

and schooling in African countries, including Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, and Nigeria, have been conducted (Akaguri, 2014; Rolleston and Adefeso-Olateju, 2014; Siaplay and Werker, 2013; Nishimura and Yamano, 2013; Härmä, 2013, 2011a, 2011b). However, research that combines choice, experiences, and aspirations in one single study is rare. This study, therefore, aims to explore this area and fill some of the large knowledge gap concerning education for children from inner-city areas.

1.2 Rationale for the study

My interest in disadvantaged children's access to education has very deep roots. It goes back to when I was only four years old. My twin sister and I ended up living with our great grandmother and grandmother in a community where a significant number of children were out of school. This was due to the boys helping their farm labourer parents on their farms. The girls in these households were house helps. They had to serve in relatively affluent houses so that they could earn a bit of money to supplement their parents' income. I always questioned why my sister and I were in school whilst the other children living in the labourers' cottages were not. An opportunity presented itself to me. This was to eventually start numeracy and literacy classes for those children who had never enrolled in or had dropped out of school. The timing of this meant that I could convince my school head teacher Miss Faustina - who was concerned about the plight of these - to respond. I spoke with her about how I could effectively support these children. After a while, she suggested that she should observe the classes. The head teacher eventually intervened by persuading some of the parents to enrol their children in the school that I attended.

I attended a free government school which set me on my path, and as a result I became interested in education and pursued higher education. So did twelve out of the forty-five children whom Miss Faustina enrolled in her school over the five-year period that she was placed there. I believe that all children have unique and deep personal talents. A real gift of Miss Faustina and the other teachers at the school was how they inspired the imagination and creativity of the children through their teaching. These government schoolteachers enabled me to have the future I wanted. The other children benefited in the same way. In their case, it would have been very difficult if their parents had had to pay tuition fees. Nevertheless, Ghana has witnessed a mushrooming of private education provision in the past two decades amid the Universal Compulsory Basic Education policy.

There is also global interest in the question of whether fee-paying schools in disadvantaged areas are superior to their government counterparts.

I lived with my great grandmother and grandmother. Neither of them went to school. Nor did my mother. Yet they believed in how education could transform people's lives. At the age of seven my grandmother recruited me to be an interpreter for an English woman who often came to the town to pursue community development initiatives for women. Somehow my mother, grandmother, and great grandmother had a way of instilling an inner confidence in me that has been invaluable. They always told me that 'you will achieve the educational goals we were deprived of' and that 'you will be an advocate to champion the cause of others'. These two pieces of advice have undoubtably shaped my life, yet I also know that I am different from my twin sister who I grew up with in the same household. She is not so academic but has done well in the fields of business and administrative work. On reflection, these women helped my twin sister and me to achieve our different aspirations.

I have been a teacher and administrator in an elite private school in Ghana. This school was one of only three private schools in the town at that time. However, many private schools have emerged in all the disadvantaged areas since then. I later pursued a Master's degree in Public Administration at the University of Brighton. The most recent part of my professional career has been at senior levels within the higher education sector in the UK where education policy and other policies intersect. As Chair of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Working Party of Lewes Town Council, I participate in policy level discussions, including those concerning children's educational experiences and aspirations. I am a Liberal Democrat councillor in my ward, and I served as Mayor of Lewes from 2018 to 2019. During my Mayoral term, I engaged with disadvantaged children by running special events for them. My values of fairness and social justice lead me to think that good government education can help every child to aspire to great heights.

This autobiographical panorama of childhood, political values, research interest and professional experiences brings me to the topic of schooling choice, experiences, and aspirations. I am a living testament to how a good but free government school can help children achieve their schooling aspirations. This raises the question of why disadvantaged households would enrol their children in a fee-paying basic school when the government option is free. This question has not been fully researched, especially in

the African context. Where research is available, evidence tends to focus on comparing the quality of government and private schools based on achievement and inputs. Research that compares schooling processes and social outcomes is limited. Accordingly, as a doctoral student who has benefited from the Ghanaian free government education policy and has taught in a private school in Ghana, I was presented with an opportunity to contribute my first-hand experience to these debates. I was concerned with what determined inner city households' schooling choices and whether private schools provided students with superior schooling experiences and higher aspirations than their fee-free counterparts.

1.3 Background and problem statement

The central aim of the thesis is to consider how households in the inner city of Accra choose schooling for their children. The nature and history of these areas make it possible for many for-profit private schools and a few government schools to operate side-by-side. However, there is little research on the extent to which households in the inner city make choices between the types of schools. I want to explore whether households living in these areas have much of a choice of school management type, their experiences once registered in schools of each management type, and how they can achieve their future aspirations by exercising this choice.

There is evidence from other developing countries that more children from disadvantaged households are patronising fee-paying private schools in cities such as Lagos (Dixon et al., 2017) and Accra (Tooley, 2007), though current reforms with the target of helping the poor have been implemented (World Bank, 2004). Some research in Ghana, typically school-based surveys and interviews with household heads, has been carried out to examine the perceptions and reasons behind choice of private and government schools (Akaguri, 2011, 2014). The main argument is that there are no consistently significant differences between these two types of schools when examination results are considered. Nevertheless, Day Ashley et al. (2014:3) have found that 'there is a lack of data on the true extent and diverse nature of private schools.' Some assert that the schooling choice literature fails to integrate the more human capital and rights-based discourses into the debate (Tikly and Barrett, 2011). According to Srivastava (2013:22):

> Discussion [on low-fee private schooling] has been largely influenced by school-effectiveness-type studies assessing relative achievement levels in core subjects such as mathematics and language or comparing

> facilities and teacher or classroom inputs across school types. The focus on *schooling processes and social outcomes* has largely been missing from such analysis, as have the long-term implications and impacts of low-fee private schooling in the context of uneven provision to the disadvantaged.

This research tries to uncover the extent to which private schools in the inner-city community are chosen based on individual and household characteristics, the differential experiences between the management types, and the nature of aspirations households have freedom to value. The purpose of this study is to use these three concepts – choice, experience, and aspiration – to examine how schooling choices are legitimised in the developing world by way of a discussion in which these concepts and their respective influences are introduced, examined, and explained. The value and rationale are not merely to fill gaps in the literature, but to indicate that education is not reducible to only human capital and its return to education. In other words, schooling must be conceptualised as a unity of multiple determinations, including social justice, rights, and capabilities (Sen, 2006b).

1.4 Significance of the study

Proponents of low-fee private schools argue that they provide a superior quality of education compared to government schools and that this has contributed to the mushrooming of low-fee private schools in disadvantaged communities in the developing world (Dixon et al., 2013). Stakeholders recognise the critical importance of knowing the full extent of the low-fee private school market. However, consideration of whether low-fee private schools are better than their government counterparts has invariably been limited to comparing facilities and/or teacher/classroom inputs across school types or been largely influenced by relative effectiveness levels in core subjects such as language and mathematics.

There could be various reasons behind this.

First, little research has been conducted in the developing world context, including Ghana, that directly compares low-fee private schools to their government counterparts (Day Ashley et al., 2014), despite the growing international interest in the question of whether private schools are superior to their government counterparts. Akaguri (2011; 2014) finds no statistically significant difference between government and private school children's examination results in Ghana. Additionally, given that Ghana subscribes to the FCUBE policy, why should private schools mushroom in the country amid the FCUBE

policy initiative? If private schools provide superior education to those who can afford it, then private schools are the route through which relatively rich households get quality education. It could be also the case that relatively poorer households are thereby condemned to lower-quality education on average than their rich counterparts. Without a strong evidence base that addresses school-type choice and access, any government policy on education for all, for example, FCUBE, risks excluding poor and disadvantaged households. With reliable evidence, the government of Ghana would have no excuse for not solving any democratic deficit inherent in the education system.

Second, the existing research does not effectively consider uneven education provision's long-term implications for and impacts on disadvantaged communities, social outcomes, and schooling processes (Srivastava, 2013). Therefore, previously unobserved evidence from government and private schools would provide critical social justice narratives that might guide education policymaking with regard to the wider purpose of education. However, this has never been explored.

Third, while two past studies in Ghana compared differences in government and private schools, their focus was on all primary six and JHS3 students (Akaguri 2011; Tooley et al., 2007). To the best of my knowledge, no study compares government and private schools at the JSS3 and primary six level despite the need for investigating the issues associated with these transitory levels of education. Exploring choice, experiences, and aspirations at these levels is important because primary six and JSS3 are the years just before the transition to JSS1 and Senior Secondary School (SSS), respectively. The obvious decision poor and disadvantaged households must make at these levels is whether children should drop out or continue their education (CREATE, 2011). Given that schooling experiences are key determinant of schooling aspiration and retention, experience must go beyond the narrow indicators of exams results and school enrolment rates to include the competencies and capabilities which children acquire through schooling (Lewin, 2011). However, lack of data has constrained this.

1.5 Research questions

RQ 1: What are the relationships between individual and household characteristics and government or private school choice/access?

RQ 2: Do apparent differences in schooling experiences exist between government and private schools? If so, how do these differences vary by individual and household characteristics?

RQ 3: What are the relationships between type of school management, children's individual household characteristics, and schooling aspirations?

1.6 Structure of the study

The rest of the thesis is organised into eight chapters. Chapter one considers the background, rationale and significance of the thesis. In chapter two, I present the contextual background of the factors that impact on provision of and access to schooling in Ghana. It begins with an overview of the basic education policy context and its influence on access to education in Ghana. It further considers the impact of government education expenditure on access to education; provision of private education; proportion of deprived communities; and the key factors that determine access to basic education in Ghana. Finally, the chapter presents a contextual overview of the inner-city and the schools studied.

In chapter three, I review the relevant literature on schooling choice in the developing world, including Ghana. The chapter begins with the definition of government and low-fee private schools. Evidence on the reasons behind the surge in private schools in the developing world is presented. The chapter goes on to present evidence on the affordability of private schools and whether they are superior to government schools based on key indicators. The chapter ends with a presentation of the conceptual framework on which the thesis is based.

In chapter four, I discuss the methods and methodology of the study. It starts with a presentation of the mixed methods research approach, design, methods, and instruments used for the research. Finally, it discusses the techniques used for data collection and analysis and ends with a presentation of my position as a researcher.

Chapters five to seven focus on the analysis of the data, again drawing on quantitative and qualitative data. Chapter five considers the relationship between accessing government or private school based on individual and household characteristics. Chapter six explores whether there are differences in government and private school children's schooling experiences and whether these differences vary by children's background

characteristics, while chapter seven looks at the nature of schooling aspirations among government and private school children and across their backgrounds.

Chapter eight provides a summary, discussions, and contributions of the study to the low-fee private school literature. It also considers implications for policy and practice, as well as recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Factors that impact on provision of and access to basic education in Ghana

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the factors that impact on access to basic education in Ghana. It also sheds light on the contextual background of the community and case study schools. It begins by investigating policies that have influenced the expansion of basic education in Ghana. This is followed by an examination of the relationship between government expenditure and access to basic education to determine its impact on the growth of government and private schools in deprived communities in the context of fee-free education policy. It proceeds by presenting the socio-economic and administrative information on the case study community and schools, respectively. The chapter concludes by pulling together key factors that might influence access to basic education in Ghana.

2.2 Basic education policy context and their influence on access to schooling

This section reviews the educational history of Ghana. It maps out the path that education in Ghana has taken in the past, how access for every child has been improved, and the links between education and socio-economic development.

2.2.1 1950-1966: Education in the colonial and early independence era

Education was introduced to Ghana (formerly known as the Gold Coast) in the early 17th century for purely evangelical purposes. There were 2,904 primary schools in the Gold Coast by 1950, on the eve of self-government (Antwi, 1992). Of these, Antwi (1992) observes that 41 were run by the government, 1,551 were managed by missionaries but received grants from the government, and the remaining 1,312 were established and run by institutions, individuals, and different organisations. At this time, overall student enrolment was said to be 271,954 (Nimako, 1976). However, access to education was expanded in 1952 to cover all children aged six to twelve through the Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) policy, which could be described as the beginning of free primary education in Ghana. As a result of the ADP policy, half a million primary school places were provided, and by 1957 primary and middle school places had tripled in number (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975).

When Ghana achieved independence in 1957 under Dr Kwame Nkrumah, the quantitative improvement of access to education carried on with the view of using education to channel social and economic development. Akyeampong (2010) notes that at the time of independence, Ghana already had an existing plan and vision for linking education to a prosperous economy. This vision comprised three key aims: producing a scientifically literate population, confronting the causes of low productivity, and increasing home-based personnel to solve Ghana's economic problems (Akyeampong, 2010). To achieve these aims, the government felt it necessary to channel adequate funding into various levels of the education system. However, in the 1980s, commentators argued that attention was exclusively paid to the primary level of education under global influence. This was against what Nkrumah envisaged.

The importance placed on education is exemplified by the fact that the Education Act 1961 provided the legislative power to fine parents up to 10 pounds or 2 pounds for every day a child did not attend school. However, the government was unable to enforce this Act despite education at primary and middle schools being free and compulsory. This was largely because there were inadequate resources and infrastructure to serve all school-going children. The legal basis for educating all school-going aged children was further solidified by the 1969, 1979, and 1992 constitutions of Ghana. Additionally, teacher education, training, and welfare were highlighted as crucial for promoting quality primary education. Unfortunately, the post-independence policies paid little attention to linking education quality to teacher training and welfare (Akyeampong, 2010).

2.2.2 The post-independence era

The aftermath of Nkrumah's overthrow in 1966 revealed an era where the rapid expansion of education provision and access came under serious scrutiny. The education system was criticised as lacking in quality, particularly because of the 1967 recommendations of the Kwapong reform committee, which selected very academically gifted children to pursue secondary school while less academically gifted children who failed the selective secondary entrance exams went on to further their education in continuation schools (Akyeampong, 2010). In a sense, the continuation system was undervalued due to its admission criteria, as it was described as encouraging inferior schooling for the masses and the opposite for the elite (Dzobo, 1978). There was also a phenomenon of rich children attending private primary school purely to prepare, pass the entrance exams, and gain access to secondary schools. This was likely a solution to shorten the lengthy,

seventeen years of basic education for most children to only thirteen. Addae-Mensah et al. (1973) commented that this phenomenon overly encouraged undue competition for secondary school entry, which limited access for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Unsurprisingly, by 1985, three out of every 10 children who passed the secondary school entrance examination were from private primary schools and were relatively younger than the rest who went through the middle school process (Akyeampong, 2010). Some argue that this marked the beginning of an entrenched social stratification in the education system where better-off households had the option of paying for private schools which were perceived to be superior to the government alternative (Donge, 2002). This meant that children from poor households were condemned to go through the failing government school system in the 1980s, which took longer to complete and provided limited social mobility prospects (Akyeampong, 2010). The 1980s also witnessed an era of mass teacher exodus to Nigeria and a shortage of textbooks, instructional materials, and vital educational inputs, as emphasised by Akyeampong (2009), which tended to create new challenges.

In 1987, a socialist, anti-elitist ideological education reform sought to find lasting solutions to contemporary educational challenges (see Akyeampong, 2009; Akyeampong et al. 2007) while also providing equitable, efficient, and fair access to basic education. Most importantly, the 1987 reforms reduced the duration of basic and secondary school education. Thus, the 4-year middle school system was replaced by 3 years of JHS after the 6-year primary school, making the compulsory basic education 9 years instead of 10. The 7-year secondary school structure was also reduced to 4 years. Crucially, there was no selective examination to progress from the primary level to the JHS level.

Although the 1987 education reform benefited most households with regards to improved access, it failed to use education to promote self-employment. Attitudes towards vocational and technical employment remained unchanged as many still perceived civil service jobs as more important (King and Martin, 2002, cited in Akyeampong, 2010). Additionally, the 1987 education reforms were said to have had an inadequate impact on the skill and qualification profiles of the labour market system. There is also evidence that the increase in access was not sustained and that the quality of education in all sectors did not improve to an appreciable level (Akyeampong et al., 2007).

To address the quality concerns in basic schools, the 1995 education reforms introduced the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education programme (FCUBE). The main objective of these reforms was to fix the problems associated with the 1987 reforms by achieving universal primary education for all school-going aged children by the year 2005. For this reason, Akyeampong (2012) asserts that increased educational resources were pumped into the education system to enhance quality and management efficiency. Further, there were other measures such as the decentralisation policy, which encouraged local communities to get involved in solving educational problems. Unfortunately, while all these quality and efficiency mechanisms made minor changes to the education system, they failed to significantly improve educational outcomes at the SHS level and beyond (Akyeampong et al., 2007).

Several recurring equity and equality concerns were noted at the basic level, including over-age enrolment, especially for girls at the age of six and regional variations in access, especially in the three northern regions, where up to 40 percent of school-going aged children were not enrolled. In addition, the framing of the FCUBE watered down the quality levels of sustained numeracy and literacy (Akyeampong, 2010). These concerns resulted in increased private sector engagement in basic education. Nevertheless, Donge's (2002) analysis illustrates that the most urgent concern facing the education system relates to how good learning outcomes for disadvantaged children who are not able to afford high-performing private schools could be achieved. This is despite efforts by the international community to support African states in improving access to basic education as a route out of poverty (Akyeampong, 2010). Regardless of the universality and the rights-based approach that have underpinned education developments in Ghana, the outcomes have been mixed. While there was an increase in enrolment, this was not matched with an increase in quality, leading Akyeampong to argue that 'good access to poor quality basic education will not yield the private and social returns of investments to promote economic growth' (Akyeampong, 2010:7).

The Education Strategic Plan (ESP), a continuous education developmental process, was initiated in 2003. The ESP is composed of ten-year plans that account for all the policies, Acts, reviews, and papers that shape education development and implementation to better improve quality and efficiency. The ten principles guiding the ESP are as follows: (1) To eliminate gender and other disparities that arise from exclusion and poverty; (2) To cater for excluded children in mainstream schools whenever possible; (3) To improve the

quality of learning and teaching, and to improve the culture of lifelong learning at all levels and for all ages; (4) To modernise and extend ICT, science education, technical and vocational education and training, and skills development at all levels; (5) To strengthen all forms of tertiary education; (6) To develop an effective, efficient, and properly rewarding teaching service; (7) To devolve delivery and fiscal systems of first- and second-cycle education to District Assemblies; (8) To ensure periodic review of education grants and allowances; (9) To make efficiency savings in the education system; and (10) To strengthen monitoring and accountability in the education system (MOE, 2003:23).

If all these educational goals are to become effective, and for education to serve as a means of poverty alleviation, then there needs to be an innovative and credible funding mechanism that ensures that schools, especially in deprived districts, are well funded. The next section examines the impact of education funding on access.

2.3 The impact of government education expenditure on access to education

Access to basic education is widely recognised as the preserve of children from upper- and middle-income families in many developing countries (Johnstone, 2004). For example, students from upper- and middle-income families were at least 8 times as likely as those from lower-income families to enter universities in Ghana (Djangmah, 2011). This is a clear indication that only the privileged few can afford the costs associated with enrolling children in schools that provide quality access and opportunities. Therefore, Akyeampong (2009) argues that a greater proportion of the government's educational budget must be allocated to the basic level to provide equitable access to poor families who might be excluded from basic school education.

Akyeampong et al. (2012) point out that while basic education lays the foundation for human, social, and economic development for every child, there are still investment gaps for the most vulnerable and marginalised children. Akyeampong et al. (2012) reveal six general typologies of exclusion, namely: (0) children excluded from pre-schooling; (1) children never enrolled in school; (2) children dropping out before the end of primary schooling; (3) primary school children who are at risk of dropping out; (4) primary school leavers who fail to progress to lower secondary school; (5) those who enter but fail to complete lower secondary school; and (6) lower secondary children at risk of dropping out. These typologies reflect the notion that educational exclusion is an intersectional

phenomenon comprised of and operating on individual and several other levels. In their research on access, transition and equity in education in Ghana, Akyeampong et al. (2012) find individual child characteristics, such as gender, and household characteristics, such as parental education and income, to be key factors excluding children from education access.

To provide equitable access to education, several efficiency and resource allocation norms have been suggested. One of UNESCO's suggested guidelines for equitable and efficient resource allocation to education is for governments to allocate between 4% and 6% of their GDP to fund public education, with more than 80% of this going to basic education (MOESS, 2008). Data from the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER, 2016) shows that public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP in Ghana has increased steadily – growing from 6.7% in 2012 to 8.3% in 2016 (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Government of Ghana's recurrent expenditure on basic education, 2012-2016 (At real 2006 constant prices, GHS in millions)

Year	GDP	Total education expenditure	Percentage of GDP
2012	35,837	3, 101	6.7
2013	44,964	3, 248	6.9
2014	56,248	3, 883	7.1
2015	70,159	4, 758	7.9
2016	88,946	6, 270	8.3

Source: Computed from ISSER (2016).

Although Table 2.1 shows a substantial increase in spending on basic education by GDP, it is not clear whether expenditure on basic education has increased. It does not, for example, disaggregate the actual spending on the poorest households. However, ISSER (2016) argues that part of the education allocation has been used to subsidise programmes that are geared towards the promotion of equitable access to quality education for the poor. These initiatives include support for children who have failed the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) to re-sit their exams and improve their grades. Additionally, 16,000 girls in 31 districts have received comprehensive scholarship packages to help them complete JHS (ISSER, 2016).

The increase in government funding of educational initiatives has resulted in more children from disadvantaged households accessing government education (World Bank, 2004). However, while government investment and initiatives continue to increase, many more disadvantaged households are increasingly accessing private schools (Akyeampong and Rolleston, 2013). This raises questions about whether these investments are enough to improve access to quality basic education for deprived communities. Ghana espouses the principles of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Among its statements is that education shall be free at the basic level. Yet, while Ghana's education funding presents an image of an increased education budget, Akyeampong (2010) finds it necessary for the government to improve the allocation system to better serve at-risk communities at the basic level. This suggests that the government's allocation system has far-reaching implications for social inequalities, and therefore for social justice. The question, then, is what proportion of the education budget is allocated to basic education?

Table 2.2 shows trends and projected costs of the education sub-sector by level from 2018 to 2030, as well as the percentage of the total education sector costs. In 2018, the largest proportion of the education budget (26%) was allocated to the SHS level, while the primary level received 21.0% of the overall education budget for the year. The proportions for the tertiary and JHS levels were 22% and 19% respectively. Compared with 2018, the percentage of the budget spent on the primary level decreased by 1% by 2019, and it is projected to stay at 20% from 2019 till 2030. The allocation for JHS level in 2018 was 19% but it is projected to decrease by 1% every year till 2025, and then decrease by 2% from 2026 to 2030. The projected education spending allocation for the period favoured the SHS level which was projected to increase from 26% to 32% of the total education costs at the expense of the JHS and primary levels. This suggests that to be able to achieve sustainable basic education for every child by 2030, the government needs to re-adjust its allocation budget in favour of the basic education sector.

Table 2.2 Trends and projected costs of education by sub-sector, 2018-2030 (costs in GHS million)

Sub-sector	2018	2019	2020	2021	2025	2030
KG	670	701	659	654	703	778
% of total	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%
Primary	1961	2173	2211	2236	2256	2509

% of total	21%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
JHS	1774	1908	1872	1835	1681	1822
% of total	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	13%
SHS	2045	2770	3157	3257	3313	3960
% of total	26%	26%	28%	29%	30%	32%
TVET	370	606	735	716	522	649
% of total	4%	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%
Inclusive education	56	60	71	71	63	88
% of total	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Tertiary	2110	2475	2559	2573	2454	2633
% of total	22%	23%	23%	23%	22%	21%

Source: MOE, 2019.

Teacher education is a recognised factor for quality education for every child (UNESCO, 2014). Nevertheless, Table 2.2 shows that the government of Ghana did not fulfil its obligation of adequately separating the allocation of teacher education funding from the tertiary sector in the years under examination. This might have serious implications for good quality teaching, which maximises the benefits of learning in every classroom for every child. The challenges highlighted have to do with the sources of educational funding, and whether the government can meet its education budget without donor support.

While allocation to the basic education level and teacher education funding (see Table 2.2) is extremely dissatisfactory, this could be changed by the government and education donor funders. Table 2.3 presents the total education resource allocation which are: government allocation funds from Donors; Internally Generated Funds (IGF); Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund); funds for free SHS; Annual Budget Funding Amount (ABFA); and funds raised from external sources or commercial loans (MOE, 2019:70). The total education funding from the government and donor sources was nearly 22 billion GHS in 2018. There was an increase of a little over 2 billion GHS in 2019, and significant projected increase in 2020 and 2021.

Table 2.3 Education sector expenditure by source of funding: 2018-2021 (GHS billions).

Sources of funding	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total budget allocation to Education	9.259	9.925	10.867	12.104
Government allocation	7.306	8.125	9.223	9.500
Internally generated funds	1.638	1.508	1.396	2.460
Donors	0.326	0.292	0.248	0.144
Other source of funding:				
Free Senior SHS	1.138	1.771	1.860	1.953
GETFund	0.925	1.239	1.921	2.253
ABFA	0.01	0.01	0.564	0.620
Other government departments	0.591	0.618	0.651	0.631
Funds from external sources and loans	0.372	0.372	0.372	0.162
Total resources	**21.565**	**23.86**	**27.102**	**29.827**

Source: MOE, Education strategic plan 2019

Nevertheless, reliance on external funding might have huge implications on the implementation of education for disadvantaged households. Without an increase in the internally generated education budget, sustainable gains in access and quality are unlikely to be achieved (UNESCO, 2014).

One of the initiatives to improve access and quality is the Capitation Grants Scheme (CGS). The CGS was introduced in 2004 by the government of Ghana as a school-level operating budget scheme for basic schools. This was a strategy which aimed at decentralising education provision (Akyeampong et al., 2007). The CGS initially covered 40 deprived districts but later expanded to cover 53 deprived schools. It is a demand-side initiative that is linked to the abolition of fees. It is also based on a single allocation formula which is determined by the Ministry of Education. This formula is non-means tested. This implies that districts described as deprived and poor based on their socio-economic circumstances receive the same amount per child as more affluent districts. The total capitation grants amounted to approximately $3 per child in 2005 (MOESS, 2006). However, commentators argue that this amount is insignificant in terms of raising the unit cost for recipients (Akyeampong et al., 2007). Additionally, there are two key challenges

associated with the capitation grant scheme. First, the grant is said to be insufficient for infrastructural development in government schools. Second, it has been argued that head teachers are ill equipped to manage the funds in order to deliver quality educational outcomes (MOESS, 2006). Some commentators also suggest that the expansion of access to quality basic education has a huge capacity implication. Akyeampong et al. (2007) argue that the current basic education funding structure does not accommodate the expansion of school facilities. For example, they note that there are inadequate school places to meet the increasing demand for access, which influences the growth of the for-profit private sector contribution to education (MOE, 2012). However, Lewin (2017) points out that markets do not deliver distributive public goods and rights equitably, and that paying fees is inappropriate for disadvantaged households.

While school enrolment has increased over the years, the Ghana Health and Demographic Survey (GHDS, 2015) reveals that for the 15-24 age category interviewed, 38% of males and 39% of females indicated that they dropped out of school because they had no money to cover their education costs. A selection of tables on the different levels of basic education are provided to help illustrate where the different types of access and opportunity exist. These are presented in section 2.4.

2.4 Private provision of basic education

Private schools in Ghana are run mainly on a for-profit basis. Tooley and Dixon (2005) asserts that many private schools in Ghana operate in low-income urban periphery communities, with many of them defined as ‘unrecognised’. Yet, they argue that these private schools offer better quality education than their government counterparts in similar communities. Similar patterns of demand for private schools co-exist in Ghana and other low-income countries (Lewin, 2017). In Ghana, the growth of low-fee private schools could be attributed to shortage of school places in government schools (excess demand), which co-exists with ‘differentiated’ demand (Lewin, 2007). According to Lewin (2007), differentiated demand occurs when households are dissatisfied with government schools and seek something better. The increase in private schools in Ghana could also be attributed to a general perception that they offer a better route to social mobility (LaRocque, 2001), as well as influencing behaviour and attitude (GSS, 2001).

Table 2.4 Number of Schools by level and type, 2012-2017

Level	Type	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	%change-2015/16-201617
Primary	Government	14142	14405	14664	14923	1.8
	Private	6360	6904	7625	8566	12.3
Total		**20502**	**21309**	**22289**	**23489**	**5.4**
JHS	Government	9076	9445	9905	10302	4.8
	Private	4006	4395	4862	5422	11.5
Total		**13082**	**13840**	**14767**	**15804**	**7.0**
SHS	Government	556	562	578	620	7.3
	Private	284	301	294	307	4.4
Total		840	863	872	927	6.3

Source: ISSER, State of the Ghana economy (2017).

Table 2.4 shows that the number of primary schools and JHSs continued to rise. At the primary level, the number of primary schools went up from 14,664 in the 2015/16 academic year to 14,923 in the 2016/17 academic year. Thus, 781 more government schools were established to cater for the increased demand for primary school places. During the same period, private school numbers increased by 2,206, nearly three times as much as government provision. The number of JHSs for the period also increased for both school management types. However, the increase in private schools was higher than that in government schools. This indicates that the number of government funded JHSs was not sufficient to accommodate the ever-growing number of children progressing from primary 6 to JHS level. This phenomenon might provide the opportunity for low fee but poor quality private and religious schools to spring up (Akyeampong et al., 2007). The next section explores disadvantaged children's participation in private schooling in comparison with the national average.

2.5 What proportion of children in educationally deprived communities in Ghana access private school?

The analysis of the Education Sector Performance Report (2015) data (see Table 2.5) on household enrolment by school type by status of "national" and "Educationally deprived Districts" indicates that between the 2012/13 and 2014/15 academic years, deprived households increased their participation in private schooling.

Table 2.5 Primary and JHS enrolment statistics by school type (National/Deprived)

	National Enrolment			Educationally Deprived Districts		
Primary	**2012/13**	**2013/14**	**2014/15**	**2012/13**	**2013/14**	**2014/15**
GER %	105.0	107.3	110.4	98.8	103.9	112.2
NER %	84.1	89.3	91.0	81.1	88.5	93.5
GAR %	107.8	112.9	115.3	107.7	124.0	128.3
NAR %	79.3	76.8	79.6	79.3	89.5	91.2
Enrolled All	4,105,913	4,117,152	4,342,315	1,082,973	1,132,055	1,225,587
6-11 years	3,286,472	3,424,146	3,578,821	888,935	964,103	1,020,947
Population (6-11 %)	3,909,857	3,835,594	3,933,682	1,095,930	1,089,756	1,092,502
% Private enrolment	23.1	23.2	25.3	7.8	8.9	12.6
JHS						
GER %	82.2	82.0	85.4	68.9	67.6	73.7
NER %	47.8	49.2	49.0	34.8	38.4	38.5
GAR %	86.4	91.8	93.8	67.5	75.2	80.8
NAR %	41.0	44.7	44.3	27.2	33.6	34.0
Transition to JHS 1	94.5	92.7	99.1	83.5	86.8	91.7
Enrol. JHS	1,452,585	1,473,921	1,591,279	301,870	324,171	361,865
Enrol JHS 1 (12-14 Yrs)	844,835	883,463	913,255	152,606	184,071	188,872
Population 12-14 years	1,766,416	1,796,478	1,863,745	437,994	479,378	490,837
% Private enrolment	20.3	20.1	22.0	6.7	6.8	9.9

Source: MOE, Education Sector Performance Report 2015

Table 2.5 shows that the total national enrolment in primary JHSs had an increasing trend for both government and private schools. The national gross primary enrolment figure for the 2012/13 academic year was 105.0% and increased to 110.4% in the 2014/15 academic

year. The figure for deprived communities was lower than the national percentage. The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) and Net Enrolment Rate (NER) increased both nationally and in deprived districts within this period to over 100%. This shows that a greater proportion of 6-11-year-olds were enrolled in school as compared to previous years, and also indicates that a significant proportion of children enrolled within the appropriate age range. Table 2.5 also reveals that the fact that the GAR was over 100%, which suggests that a significant number of children entering primary school were over 6 years of age, and therefore over-aged. Within this period, enrolment in private schools also increased, nationally but deceased in deprived districts. However, the figure in deprived areas is much lower than nationally. This shows that a greater proportion of deprived households attended government schools.

At the JHS level, the overall enrolment increased from 1.47 million in the 2013/14 academic year to 1.59 million in 2014/15. During this period, the GER increased from 82.0% to 85.4%, and the NER decreased from 49.2% to 49.0%. This implies that there was a slight decline in the appropriateness of the age of enrolled JHS children. The figures also indicate that at the JHS level, deprived children showed relatively lower enrolment outcomes. While the GER increased in deprived districts from 67.6% in 2013/14 to 73.7% in 2014/15, the NER remained essentially the same. This implies that while a greater number of disadvantaged children progressed to the JHS level, there was no improvement in the number of over-aged enrolments. Interestingly, the transition from primary 6 to JHS 1 in deprived districts improved. However, this improvement was lower than the national average.

An increase in private school enrolment at the JHS level was noted. Nationally, the proportion of private school enrolment increased from 20.1% in 2013/14 to 22% in 2014/15. However, in deprived districts, there was a significant (3.1%) increase in private school enrolment within this period, from 6.8% to 9.9%.

This evidence shows that access to private schools generally increased, but deprived communities had a higher than average increase in private school enrolment at the JHS level. This clearly shows that disadvantaged communities are accessing fee-paying schools. Lewin (2017) argues that such choices are motivated in part by notions of education as a positional good for those who can afford it. This has serious implications. It is reported that in Ghana many poor disadvantaged households accessing private schools borrow money to finance fees and neglect vital areas of expenditure such as

nutrition and health. Akaguri (2014) notes that non-payment of private school fees also brings direct intimidation on parents. The evidence so far reveals an increase in the number of and participation in private schools in an era of free and compulsory government education for sustainable development. The next section examines the key factors that influence access to basic education in Ghana.

2.6 What key factors determine access to basic education?

Research has identified several complex and overlapping factors that impact on access to basic education. However, this section focuses on the key individual child and household factors that impact on access to basic education in Ghana. They include household characteristics; cost of schooling; supply-side factors such as supply of schools; schooling practices; and the private school provision sector.

2.6.1 Household factors and school access

Children's access to school might be influenced by the perception households hold. Education could be perceived as an investment or a consumption good (Colclough et al., 2003). For example, when families see schooling as investing in their children's future careers, then access to education is influenced by the value of their investments (Bray and Bunly, 2005; Colclough et al., 2003). However, household income alone might not principally impact on children's access to schooling (Colclough et al., 2003). The benefit of schooling investment is also associated with better information on what government schools are available, and whether they are of enough quality to realise the benefits education can bring. Bray and Bunly (2005) argue that households with more income and better education are more likely to invest in their children's education. The opposite is true for disadvantaged households, who may not take the necessary risks to invest in their children's education and might not even enrol their children in schools (Akyeampong et al., 2012; Lewin, 2007). On the other hand, if education is perceived as something everybody can consume, like any consumable good, improvements in household income might drive demand for education.

Some researchers have focused on nutrition and its links with access to education completion and exclusion. For example, Sarris and Shams (1991) found in Ghana that only about 29% of the children studied ate meals that had some protein in it. Unsurprisingly, 36% of the children were severely malnourished, with many weighing below the 80% Harvard weight for age ratio. They concluded that in households where

children are malnourished, there is a tendency towards low enrolment, attendance, and completion rates (Fentiman et al., 2001). Further, CREATE studies made an association between household characteristics and exclusion from basic education (Akyeampong et al., 2012). These household characteristics included low parental education, poverty, having overaged children, and poor health and nutrition.

Some researchers have found that children's birth order impacts on access to school. This is principally because poor and disadvantaged households may not be able to educate all the children in the household to the same level of education (Glewwe and Jacoby, 1994; Rolleston, 2009). For households employed in the public sector or in formal employment, Rolleston (2009) studied the relationship between human capital, poverty, educational access, and exclusion in Ghana between 1991 and 2006. He noted that preference for education may be associated with positive association of education with higher future career aspirations in Ghana. He also suggested that education levels have significant influence in determining household welfare.

Educated parents are more likely to support their children's learning and to recognise its value. Compared to uneducated parents, educated parents might be more satisfied by educating their children. Likewise, the desire for educated children may also differ by level of parental education (Colclough et al., 2003). However, researchers generally analyse father and mother education level in the equation for differential impact on child school enrolment. Akyeampong and Rolleston's (2013) models of school choice assumed that key household characteristics, including mother and father education level, might play an independent role in the decision to send children to school. In Akyeampong and Rolleston's (2013) study, both mother's and father's education level appeared to be especially important variables in determining school choice.

Migration status has been found to impact on school participation in Ghana. Hashim (2005) studied child migrants who migrated from farming households in the north of Ghana to urban cities in the south of Ghana. The study examined children from a village called Tempane Natinga and explored the reasons behind their migration by interviewing the children and their parents, who were left behind in the village. Out of the 78 children interviewed, 20 said they migrated to the city for quality education, 39 for employment, and 19 children said the primary reason behind their migration was to help their relatives but that they did not discount the idea of furthering their education. She also found that child migrants usually drop out of school due to non-payment of school expenses or

failing term exams. Akyeampong et al. (2012) found that the implementation of the FCUBE did not entirely eradicate fees, as households must pay levies, including unauthorised ones. They stressed that while the FCUBE and other initiatives had achieved some successes, they did not specifically target issues that exclude specific children from access to school. Therefore, qualitative improvements must accompany the quantitative increase in access to education for marginalised children.

At the individual level, a child's gender exerts a significant impact on differential access to schooling and perceived future benefits through differences in the opportunity cost of education with regards to lost current earnings (Akyeampong and Rolleston, 2013). However, gendered schooling in Ghana is contextual, and differs across Ghana. The available evidence points to boys' advantage at the expense of girls, so far as access to school is concerned (Akyeampong et al., 2007). Among girls, those living in rural and peri-urban areas are further disadvantaged (Akyeampong et al., 2007). However, in certain areas, boys are under enrolled. For example, in their study of the Mamprusi community in the north of Ghana, Fentiman et al. (2001) found that there were more girls enrolled in school than boys (70% girls as against 30% boys). They noted that this was an exception rather than the norm in the Upper West Region as a whole. Finding regarding drop-out rates between boys and girls are mixed. While Avotri (2000) found a higher drop-out rate among boys, as they leave school to work, Johnson and Kyle (2001) found a higher drop-out rate for girls.

The reasons behind lower access and transition and higher drop-out of girls are associated with a plethora of barriers emanating from poverty (Akyeampong et al., 2007). They include practices and beliefs associated with the traditional gender roles girls play in households and communities; the expected benefits and opportunity costs of sending girls to school; and costs of schooling, especially when households are constrained by paying for schooling expenses, in which case they tend to privilege boys over girls (Avotri, 2000). For example, Yidana (2000) found this to be the case in the Northern Region of Ghana after studying the factors that influence girls' and boys' enrolment.

Finally, religion and other cultural practices might impact on households' access to education. Some studies in developing countries have included religious grouping in their analysis of access to education (Colclough et al., 2003). However, the links between religion and other cultural practices may combine to impact children's schooling

participation. For example, Muslim households have been noted to have a lower demand for schooling, especially for girls (Colclough et al., 2003).

2.6.2 Costs of schooling

The decision to send a child to a government or private school is influenced by the cost of schooling (Akaguri, 2011). The direct costs associated with school enrolment and attendance such as tuition fees, uniforms, food, extra classes, and stationary tend to increase as children start and progress through the educational process (GSS, 2000).

While the economically advantaged might find it easier to pay for all the direct costs of schooling, disadvantaged households may find it burdensome. Nevertheless, some disadvantaged households desire to enrol their children in private schools, although they might not be able to afford the cost for all their school-going children. For example, Glewwe and Patrinos (1999) noted that some poor households have a split enrolment system where they register the majority of their children in government schools, while at least one child is registered in a fee-paying private school.

While policy initiatives such as the FCUBE and CGS have reduced families' cost burden, feeding and uniform costs constitute a barrier for disadvantaged households (Akyeampong et al., 2012). Therefore, disadvantaged households who choose fee-paying private schools incur a very heavy financial burden – both direct and indirect – compared to their richer counterparts. There are two obvious implications that emerge from this. First, disadvantaged households that choose private schools over tuition-free government school have significantly higher schooling expenses than their peers who register their children in government schools. Second, since poor and disadvantaged households pay lower fees than richer households, it could be suggested that they receive lower quality education relative to higher income groups (Lewin, 2017). Lewin (2017) argues that the discussion of low-fee private schools often fails to differentiate low prices for those families who access private schools, and low costs for the proprietors who sell the service for profit. Lewin (2017) notes that schools serving low-income households with lower quality facilities and lower running costs are schools which are charged to fulfil children's right to education.

In Ghana, direct and opportunity costs combine to exclude many poor children from access to basic education (Oduro, 2000). Additionally, the cost of books, food, and uniforms can equally act as a barrier for enrolling children in schools, even after the

implementation of the FCUBE policy that abolished school fees. Therefore, school fees may not be the only key barrier to accessing education.

2.6.3 Supply-side factors

Supply-side factors could also determine access to basic education. This section focuses on key factors such as the supply of schools and practices that impact on access to basic education. On the supply side, the number of schools available, their quality, and whether they are accessible to households are very important determinants. Akyeampong and Rolleston (2013) observe that earlier on in a child's schooling, the opportunity to progress to higher education levels affects enrolment. In Ghana, Akyeampong et al. (2007) note that the supply of schools in some parts of the country is problematic. They argue that in deprived communities, access to post-primary education is inadequate. Apart from the (un)availability of schools, there is also the issue of what kind of school children have access to. It is argued that many deprived schools lack access to qualified teachers and teaching resources, have high pupil-teacher ratios, and have high gender imbalance, all of which encourage the growth of and access to low-fee private schools in such communities (Akyeampong et al., 2007).

Private schooling used to be the preserve of better-off families in Ghana. However, Tooley (2005) found in Ghana that there was a proliferation of private schools in deprived areas which were run mainly for profit. He conducted a two-year in-depth study of key sub-Saharan African countries, including Ghana, regarding the extent and nature of low-fee private schools. The study included a systematic census and survey of all primary and secondary private and government schools in selected low-income areas. In his Ghana study, he focused on the Ga District of Accra, in which 70% of the resident families were living below the poverty line. He found that only 25% of the 779 schools in the Ga District were government schools, an indication that there were insufficient government schools to cater for all the school-going children in the district. He also examined between 3000 and 4000 children in a stratified random sample of 260 schools. He administered questionnaires to parents, teachers, students, head teachers, and school managers. He also examined the children in mathematics and English as well as one other subject to test their IQ. He concluded that most of the children (64%) living in the Ga District attended low-fee private schools which charged fees but generally performed better than the government schools studied. He also found the private schools to have better pupil-teacher ratios, higher teacher commitment, and better school facilities relative to the

government alternatives. He found that the pupils at the private schools, which cost significantly less than the government schools studied, performed better than the government school children, at least in the subjects he examined. He also reported that despite the lower salaries in private schools, there was no difference in teacher satisfaction between the two school management types. Based on these indicators, he argued that private schools were more effective for educating poor and disadvantaged households than government schools.

Using questionnaires, interviews, and secondary data on BECE results, Akaguri (2011) studied Rural Mfantseman district of Ghana to test whether private schools provide better educational outcomes to the poor. He concluded that the perception of private school advantage was not supported by the evidence. He argued that it was rather household heads' aspiration for better schooling that fuelled demand for low-fee private schools. This finding contradicts the assertion that low-fee private schools produce better educational outcomes compared with their government counterparts. The notion of low-fee private school superiority was therefore based on belief rather than reality, as private school children did not consistently outperform their government school peers, at least based on examination results (Akaguri, 2011). The mixed outcome of children's learning as evidenced by Akaguri (2011) leads one to question why poor households must pay tuition fees for their wards when all they are doing is to paying lower fee for lower cost education (Lewin, 2017). Nevertheless, quality appears to determine the demand for education to some extent (Bergmann, 1996).

Bergmann (1996:586) identified a complex mix of three factors that constitute quality, namely output (student achievement), process (teaching/learning interaction in the classroom, curriculum), and inputs (human resources, material resources, time). Since some disadvantaged households have no or little education, their evaluation of what constitutes quality education may only be based on limited perceptions of what quality really is. The Chief Examiners' Reports of the BECE highlighted three main weaknesses concerning the 2016-17 English examination results. They emphasised that most of the candidates lacked the ability to construct simple readable sentences and did not have an adequate repertoire of vocabulary to be able to answer the questions (WAEC, 2017). While the report did not aggregate the results by type of school, it seems highly likely that most disadvantages might fall into the category of children who lack English skills, as highlighted by the report. Commentators believe that failings such as the ones

identified by the report might have encouraged polarity and the growth of private schools in deprived communities. There is also the belief that private schools might provide a mechanism for better social mobility (Akaguri, 2011; Akyeampong, 2009).

While perceived examination results might determine schooling access, the experiences children have when they enrol in school are particularly important for their progression through education. Using a qualitative method, Alhassan and Adzahlie-Mensah (2010) interviewed teachers, school-going children, and head teachers in the Winneba municipal area to investigate how children experience the teaching and learning environment. They concluded that teacher absenteeism, lateness, and use of violence and corporal punishment have significant influence on exclusion after initial school enrolment.

A major gap in the low-fee private school research from the developing world is that it does not account for how students experience the school process, nor does it examine children's aspirations. This is because education policies value the variables that they can measure, such as inputs and achievements. Therefore, the evidence does not present the true nature of low-fee private schools. What is missing from the debate is how children's experiences and aspirations compare in an inner-city environment. Consequently, this thesis examines the classroom experiences and aspirations of government and private school students once they are registered in their respective schools. The following section presents the contextual background of the study community and schools.

2.7 The socio-economic context of the inner-city

The concept of schooling access – choice, experiences, and aspirations – cannot be examined in isolation from the wider context of the communities in which schools and households exist. This is due to the complex nature of education and its links with community, social, and economic issues. Therefore, this section describes the inner-city context, with a focus on the social, economic, and administrative characteristics of the schools studied.

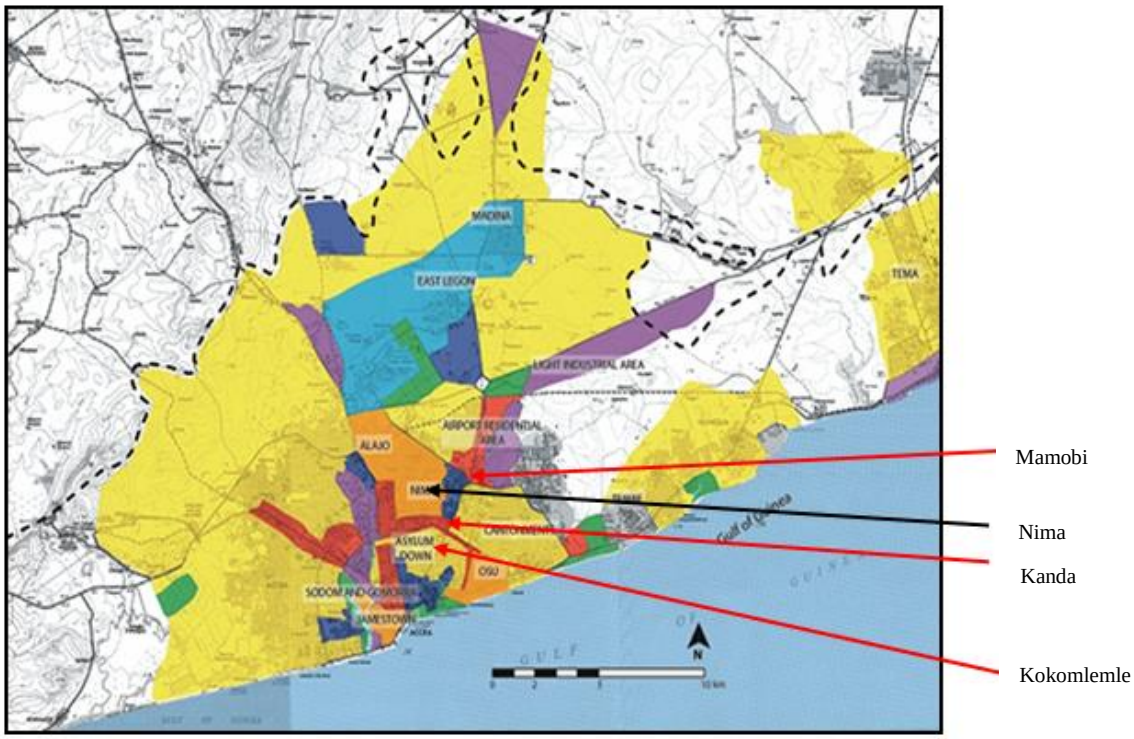
The study focuses on an inner-city community of Accra, the capital city of Ghana. The community is predominantly comprised of diverse migrant groups from within the country and neighbouring West African countries, including Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso. The nature of this community provides a good context to examine the type of schools they have access to. The inner-city community is one of the informal, low-income

areas of Accra and comprises about 352 acres of elevated ground (Owusu et al., 2008), and there are both government and private schools located in the community.

The housing characteristics of the community have been described as compound-based (Yankson, 2000) and improperly planned (Songsore, 2003b), especially the eastern part of the community. Songsore (2003b) notes that the buildings in the community lack proper planning permission, are haphazardly built as a result, and are densely populated, with three to twelve people per room. Songsore (2003b) also describes the community as a 'slum' with the visibly unpleasant sights of heaps of rubbish in containers and open gutters, resulting in very serious sanitation problems and flooding that confront the residents who live there. Livestock are often found feeding on some of the rubbish on or along the streets and other open places. The area also has a very poor drainage system, such that the very well-constructed drains along the roads are in a deplorable state, with most of them caving in. These drains, according to the report, are dirty and filled with rubbish, and some run through compounds of houses. There is basically a minimal provision of amenities such as adequate government schools, refuse dumping grounds, toilet facilities, playing fields, and recreational opportunities for community members. Although there appeared to have been a slight improvement at the time of this study, there was evidence of uncontrolled overdevelopment. All of this along with the lack of basic infrastructure together appear to reveal a substandard and deprived community.

The occupational background of the residents is mainly trading for the women and civil service for the men (Awumbila et al., 2014). Most of the women engage in market trading, but Awumbila et al. (2014) find that a few of the women also engage in palm-kernel oil extraction while most men work in low-paid civil service jobs - as "watchmen" (security men) – or as labourers. The occupational level of the residents is linked with their income level. Only a small proportion and insignificant percentage of the population work as office employees. Most of the office employees have a relatively higher standard of living and higher educational background compared to those who work as security men. Figure 2.1 below shows the location of the study community. The study community, Nima, is surrounded by Mamobi, Kanda, and Kokomlemle. It is possible that some of the children living in Nima access schools in the surrounding areas. There was a cluster of twenty schools in and around Nima but only thirteen schools consented to participate in the study. Section 2.8 presents the administrative data of the schools studied.

Figure 2.1 Map showing Nima, Mamobi, Kokomlemle, and Kanda (communities within which the project schools were located), in the City of Accra



Source: http://www.kon.org/urc/v6/george/html

2.8 Characteristics of the schools under study

The 13 schools under study are included in a cluster of 20 schools, all of which have primary and JHS. Consistent with the Ghana decentralisation policy, the schools are linked to the community through their respective Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs). Data from the administrative section of the head teachers' survey questionnaires revealed information about enrolment numbers, drop-out, distance to and from school, and BECE pass and failure rates. The survey also collected data on staff and other resources. Table 2.6 shows each case study school's name, type, level, year established, and head teacher characteristics. The thirteen schools studied comprised four government and nine private schools. Three of the government schools were established in 1952, while the fourth was established in 1986. Interestingly, two of the private schools were established in the fifties around the time the first three government schools were established. The rest of the private schools were established between 1997 and 2004. Three of the government schools have children at the pre-primary level. The remaining government school has no

pre-school facilities or placements. All the private schools in the study area have places for pre-school children. However, all the government and private schools have primary and JHS levels.

Table 2.6 Surveyed school type, level, year established and head teachers' sex, age, qualification and experience (number of years in the teaching profession)

School	Type	Level	Year established	Sex and age of Head teacher	Qualification of teacher/Rank	Number of years
1	Public	Pre-school/ primary/JHS	1952	Male/48	Master's Degree in Education/ Assistant Director	19
2	Public	Primary/JHS	1952	Male/52	Degree/ Assistant Director II	26
3	Public	Pre-school/ primary/JHS	1952	Female/47	Degree (BSC Hons)/ Assistant Director I	18
4	Public	Pre-school/ primary/JHS	Primary: 1986 JHS: 1993	Male/56 Male/57	Primary: 1st Degree/ Assistant Director. JHS: Technical/ Dep Director	Prim: 22 JHS: 34
5	Private	Pre-school/ primary/JHS	1997	Male/38	Diploma/ Assistant Superintendent	9
6	Private	Pre-school/ primary/JHS	1955	Male/43	Cert A Post-Secondary/ Unranked	16
7	Private	Pre-school/ primary/JHS	1981	Male/52	1st Degree/ Assistant Director	32

8	Private	Pre-school/ primary/JHS	2004	Male/-	Diploma in Basic Education/ Unranked	4
9	Private	Pre-school/ primary/JHS		Male/-	Post Sec/ Principal Superintendent	40 (retiring in November.
10	Private	Pre-school/ primary/JHS	1957	Male/-	GCE O Level/ unranked	12
11	Private	Pre-school/ primary/JHS		Female/-		
12	Private	Pre-school/ primary/JHS		Male/-		
13	Private	Pre-school/ primary/JHS	1981	Female/-		

In 1993, the fourth government school established the JHS level to accommodate year six pupils. It is interesting to note that, five years after the government established the first three schools, two private schools had already been established in the community.

The mapping questionnaire collected school-level data from head teachers. As indicated in Table 2.6, only seven head teachers, comprising all the government school head teachers and three private school head teachers, declared their age. The youngest head teacher was 38, while the oldest was 57. Ten of the head teachers were male, while only three were female (one government, two private). This shows male predominance in leadership in the study context. The information presented in Table 2.6 indicates that the average amount of teaching experience of head teachers in government and private schools was 24 and 19 years, respectively. Head teachers in the government schools tended to be better-educated and more highly ranked than their private counterparts. The least-qualified government school head teacher had obtained a first degree and was ranked, whereas the least-qualified private school head teacher had obtained a General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level and was unranked.

2.8.1 Enrolment numbers

The mapping questionnaires also collected data on enrolments for the 2005/6 and 2013/14 academic years. Data on school enrolment was very scanty in some of the schools, particularly in the private schools. Out of the 13 schools that initially agreed to participate in the study, only 9 schools provided data on enrolment for the 2005/6 and 2013/14 academic years. Out of these, there were only 6 schools that had full data for the two academic years. Only 3 out of the 4 government schools had full data on enrolment for the two academic years. The remaining one lacked data at the primary level for the 2005/6 academic year. There was an indication of a lack of record keeping in both government and private schools in the study community.

Table 2.7 Surveyed school enrolment by gender in the 2005/6 and 2013/14 academic years

School	2005/06	Male	Female	2013/14	Male	Female
1 Public	1060	551	509	987	464	523
2 Public	610	307	303	613	291	322
3 Public	430	203	232	484	220	264
4 Public	194* JHS only	99* JHS only	95* JHS only	682	266	416
Total Public	**2294**	**1160**	**1139**	**2766**	**1241**	**1525**
5 Private	479	232	247	451	200	251
6 Private	369	175	194	536	282	254
7 Private	580* Primary	302* Primary	278* Primary	1047	523	524
8 Private	315	165	150	321	171	150
9 Private	N/A	N/A	N/A	150	77	73
Total Private	**1743***	**874***	**869***	**2505**	**1253**	**1252**

***Some schools have incomplete data on enrolment.**

Table 2.7 shows enrolment figures for the public and private schools for the 2005/6 and 2013/14 academic years. Note that there are missing data for some of the schools. Enrolment figures for girls were significantly higher than for boys in public schools in the 2013/14 academic year. In the private schools, the total enrolment went up significantly within the 8-year period from 2006 to 2014. Whereas the total private enrolment shows gender parity, there were twice as many girls as boys in school 5 (private) enrolled in the 2013/14 academic year. The gender distribution in enrolment does not reflect the national enrolment data. Nationally, the number of boys is slightly higher than girls (GSS, 2013).

Table 2.8 Dropout rate for school years 2005/6 and 2013/14

School	2005/6	Male	Female	2013/14	Male	Female
1 Public	N/A	N/A	N/A	7	3	4
2 Public	92	35	57	70	55	15
3 Public	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
4 Public	2* JHS	No data	No data	4* JHS		
5 Private	2	No data	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
6 Private	8	4	4	8	5	3
7 Private	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
9 Private	8	4	4	3	3	0
10 Private	No data	No data	No data	2	1	1

Table 2.8 provides information on student drop-out. It includes the number of students who dropped out in the 2005/6 and 2013/14 academic years. A range of 2 to 92 pupils dropped out from the government schools, compared to 2 to 8 from the private schools. Overall, many more males than females dropped out from the government schools than from the private schools. A smaller proportion of pupils dropped out in the 2013/14 academic year compared to the 2005/6 academic year. Table 2.9 provides the reasons why children dropped out of school.

Table 2.9 Reasons for Drop-out

Reasons for dropping out by school type	
Public	**Private**
Unable to pay levies	Migration
Relocation	Could not afford fees
Lack of parental care	Relocation
Peer pressure	Bad performance in exams
Teenage pregnancy	Repetition
Bereavement	

A closer look at why students dropped out across the school types revealed some interesting patterns. In the public schools, school levies, peer pressure, teenage pregnancy, and bereavements were the reasons for dropping out. The fact that pupils dropped out due to non-payment of levies in the public schools is puzzling, given that tuition in the public schools is free. Relocation and migration were common among both type of schools. It is worth mentioning that Table 2.9 also reveals the vulnerability associated with drop-out in the public schools. In the public schools, children dropped-out due to lack of parental care, peer pressure, and teenage pregnancy.

Table 2.10 School expenses in GHS per term

School	Pre-school	Lower Primary	Upper Primary	JHS	
1	100	100	100	100	Public
2	-	25	25	25	Public
3	25	25	25	25	Public
4 (Benefits from school feeding).	6: Levy 45: Islamic study fees	6: Levy 45: Islamic study fees	6: Levy 45: Islamic study fees	9: Levy 45: Islamic study fees	Public
5	101	108.50	110.00	122	Private
6	166.50	192.70	202.70	222.70	Private
7	327	532	570	630	Private
8	98	98	98	132	Private
10	98.70	98.70	98.70	111	Private

Another key piece of administrative data collected was the amount of fees/expenses children paid in government and private schools. In government schools, overall expenses, in the form of levies, ranged from 6 GHS to 100 GHS per term (see table 2.10 above). School 4 (government) charged the lowest levy of 6 GHS at the primary and KG levels and 9 GHS at the JHS level due to it being the only government school to benefit from the school feeding programme. However, children in that school paid 45 GHS to cover specific Islamic classes which are not offered by the government but are valued by households. School fees and expenses in private schools ranged from 98 GHS to 630 GHS per term. The school fees charged in school 7 (private) covered feeding and items such as textbooks, pencils, and exercise books. Asking parents to pay feeding fees upfront meant that the children in the private schools had the opportunity to stay in school for their meals. Conversely, public school children, except for those at school 4, bought their own lunch on school days. Some were observed going out to collect lunch money from their parents during break time. In some cases, children never returned to class as their parents had not yet made any sales.

Table 2.11 BECE Examination pass/failure rate for the 2005/6 and 2013/14 academic years

	2005/6	Boys	Girls	**2013/14**	Boys	Girls
1 public	**48**	**21**	**27**	**45**	**24**	**21**
	Pass=48	Pass=21	Pass=27	Pass=45	Pass=24	Pass=21
2 public	**51**	**24**	**27**	**61**	**28**	**33**
	Pass=40	Pass=19	Pass=21	Pass=46	Pass=22	Pass=24
	Fail=11	Fail=5	Fail=6	Fail=15	Fail=6	Fail=9
3 public	**39**	**18**	**21**	**52**	**20**	**32**
	pass=32	Pass=15	Pass=17	Pass=50	Pass=18	Pass=32
	Fail=7	F=3	Fail=4	Fail=2	Fail=2	Fail=0
4 public	-	-	-	**43**	**13**	**30**
				Pass=8	Pass=4	Pass=4
				Fail=35	Fail=9	Fail=26
5 Private	**29**	**11**	**18**	**24**	**8**	**16**
	Pass=29	Pass=11	Pass=18	Pass=24	Pass=8	Pass=16
6 Private	**38**	**18**	**20**	**32**	**16**	**16**
	Pass=38	Pass=18	Pass=20	Pass=32	Pass=16	Pass=16
7 Private	-	-	-	**125**	**69**	**56**
				Pass=125	Pass=69	Pass=56
8 Private	-	-	-	-	-	-
9 Private	**31**	**16**	**15**	**33**	**20**	**13**
	Pass=31	Pass=16	Pass=15	Pass=33	Pass=20	Pass=13
10	-	-	-	**23**	**11**	**12**
				Pass=23	Pass=11	Pass=12

Table 2.11 provides a picture of the BECE examination results for the 2005/6 and 2013/14 academic years. All the private schools had a hundred percent pass rate for their students. Public school '1' also had a 100% pass rate for both the 2005/6 and 2013/14 academic years. There were two government faith schools (1 and 4). School 1 was a Christian school while school 4 was a Muslim school. However, while school 1 had a 100% pass rate in the 2013/14 academic year, only 8 out of 43 students in school 4 passed their BECE examination (4 out of 13 boys; 4 out of 30 girls; 35 out of 43 total students).

Table 2.12 Distance to and from school, and duration of the journey

School	Average distance	%>3km	Means of transport	Duration of journey
1 Public	1km	2%	Public transport/foot	10/20mins
2 Public	1km	10%	Public transport/foot	25 mins
3 Public	1km	7%	Foot	30 mins
4 Public	200 metres	18%	Public transport/foot	25 mins
5 Private	300metres	None	Public transport/foot	30 mins
6 Private	2km	5%	Public transport/foot	30 mins
7 Private	2km	3%	Public transport/foot	20 mins
8 Private	100 metres	1%	Public transport/foot	10 mins
10 Private	1km	10%	Foot	15-20 mins

As shown in Table 2.12, most of the schools were in proximity with their students' households. Most of the children walked to school while a few of them used public transport. The minimum and maximum journey durations were 15 and 30 minutes, respectively. Only few of the children lived more than 3 kilometres away from the school. Key school inputs are reported below.

Table 2.13 Key educational inputs of the study schools

School	Number of trained teachers	Number of untrained teachers	Type of building	Toilet facilities	Number of teaching guides	Boxes of chalk available	Boxes of chalk needed
1 Public	21	None	Cement	22 - good	6	40	40
2 Public	24	None	Cement	4 - poor	9	70	None
3 Public	19	None	Cement	6 - poor	27	14	63
4 Public	12	12	Cement	None	None	24	50

5 Private	5	10	Cement	2	15	3	-
6 Private	8	15	Cement	12	60	400	-
7 Private	8	15	Cement-8. Wooden-8	6	18	50	-
8 Private	5	15	Cement	5 - poor	None	200	60
9 Private	11	6	Cement	6 - poor	None	2	20
10	None	14	Cement	Available	3	13	24

As shown in Table 2.13, public schools had more trained teachers than private schools. Only 12 teachers in the public schools were untrained. In school 10 (private), there were no trained teachers. All the case study schools had cement block structures, apart from the school 7, which had a combination of cement and wooden structures. Apart from school 1, which had 22 good toilet facilities, the rest had inadequate, poor-quality toilets. School 4 was a public school but had no toilet facilities. Children and teachers in this school had to use neighbouring public toilets. Children in this school were usually seen loitering around the community, conveniently citing ‘going to the toilet’ as an excuse. This has a serious implication on children’s access to education. All the case study schools had access to teaching guides except one public and two private schools. Data on school inspections is presented in table 2.14 below.

Table 2.14 School Inspections

School	Frequency of inspection in a year	Last school inspection	Feedback	Support received	Nature of Support	Why did you not get support?
1 Public	**Once**	2015	Yes	**No**	None	-
2 Public	**3 to 4**	2015	Yes	**Yes**	Provision of furniture. Specialist teachers.	N/A
3 Public	**3**	2014/2015	Yes	**No**	None	Do not know
4 Public	**1 to 2**	2015	Yes	**No**	None	Metro office didn't have materials (lesson notebooks).
5 Private	**3**	2014	Yes	**Yes**	In-service training	N/A
6 Private	**1**	2013	Yes	**Yes**	None	There were no materials
7 Private	**3**	2015	Yes	**Yes**	In Service training	N/A
8 Private	**-**	-	-	**-**	-	-
9 Private	**1**	2011	Yes (on output of work)	**No**	None	N/A
10 Private	**N/A**	N/A	N/A	**N/A**	N/A	We are a private school

Head teachers gave answers to whether their schools were inspected and how often that took place in a year. Two schools (8 and 11) had no inspection records due to them being private. The rest of the private schools had at least one inspection in a year. Two schools did not receive any inspections in 2011 and 2013. All the schools that were inspected received feedback after the inspections, but few received the necessary support. Only one public school received some support in the form of furniture and provision of specialist teachers, while two private schools received in-service training. Responding to why schools did not get the support they needed, the head teacher of school 4 (public) answered that the 'Metro office did not have adequate materials. It is important to note that all the government schools were up to date with their inspections. Private schools were generally inspected by their management teams.

Table 2.15 Pupil Teacher Ratio for the case study schools

Pupil /teacher ratio (P-Primary and JHS)			
	2005/6	**2013/14**	**2015/16**
1 Public	Pre-90	Pre- 82	Pre-41
	P- 60	P- 49	P- 45
	JHS- 31	JHS- 16	JHS - 25
2 Public	P-66	P-63	P-48
	JHS-12	JHS-13	-
3 Public	Pre-	Pre- 39	Pre- 22
	P-	P- 66	P- 49
	JHS-28	JHS-27	JHS-28
4 Public	-	Pre-23	Pre -23
		P-66	P - 48
5 Private	Pre- 36	Pre- 36	Pre-
	P- 51	P- 44	P- 38
	JHS- 15	JHS-15	JHS-
6 Private	Pre- 25	Pre- 37	Pre-
	P- 35	P- 55	P- 69
	JHS- 16	JHS - 18	JHS -
7 Private	Pre- 59	Pre- 59	Pre-
	P- 38	P- 38	P- 38
	JHS -	JHS -	JHS-52
8 Private	**N/A**	N/A	N/A

9 Private	Pre- 19 P- 31 JHS - 13	Pre- 22 P- 30 JHS- 8	Pre- P- 22 JHS
10 Private		P- 11	P - 17

As shown in Table 2.15, government schools tended to have higher pupil-teacher ratios on all levels than their private counterparts in all the three academic years. However, two private schools (5 and 7) had similar pupil-teacher ratios to public schools.

2.9 Summary

This chapter has reviewed several factors which might explain the pattern of schooling access in Ghana, and the contextual background of the study community and administrative data from the case study schools. The review has shown that before independence, access to education was largely restricted to a few privileged individuals. After independence, several education policies were implemented to widen education participation to every child to help improve economic and social development. Notable among these policies is the FCUBE, implemented in 2005, which abolished tuition fees for all children attending government schools. Despite this, and other policies inducing demand for government schools, there has been a growth in private schools in Ghana, including in deprived communities. Therefore, the literature sought to identify the key determinants that influence households' demand for as well as choice of schooling. Whether a child is enrolled in school and in a particular type of school depends on individual and household characteristics and the perception of the benefits of enrolment. Since school choice depends on both individual and household characteristics, this thesis will examine the key individual child and household characteristics that influence school choice.

When the FCUBE was introduced, the expectation was that every child would have a good school experience as part of their right to education. However, this chapter has revealed issues that might constitute a violation of children's right to education. If disadvantaged households perceive private schools to offer better school experiences, they might enrol their children in private schools instead of the free government alternative. Therefore, the schooling experiences of government and private schools will be examined.

Basic education is free for every child in Ghana, and during this study, SHS has also become free. However, the contextual data presented earlier suggested that there were inadequate government school places for every child to attend for free. There was also no government SHSs for children to attend for free. Low-fee private schools that are less-resourced than their government equivalent are meeting the increasing demand for access. This has huge implications for access to education for inner-city households and the education sector. The data suggests that the free basic and secondary education policy requires adequate financial and logistical input in order to become a reality for all, especially for disadvantaged communities.

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Finally, in developing countries, including Ghana, schooling could raise children's aspirations in terms of their future careers and personal goals (Oketch and Rolleston, 2010; Robeyns, 2006). As a result, disadvantaged households that enrol their children in government or private schools might be able to realise this goal, thus achieving their schooling goals. However, in inner cities in Ghana, there is a lack of access to government schools for most children (Tooley, 2005). Therefore, when disadvantaged households choose fee-paying schools instead of non-enrolment, it raises questions with regards to why they are investing in their children's education and what benefits they expect to get. These issues will be examined in chapters 5 to 7. The next chapter reviews the low-fee private school phenomenon in the developing world context and presents the conceptual framework for this thesis.

Chapter 3: Government and private school choice and differences: Review of the literature.

3.1 Introduction

Low-fee private school provision is widespread in developing countries (Srivastava, 2013a), but research on the comparative differences between the choice of private and government schools is sparse. This chapter reviews existing knowledge about the government/private school debate. Specifically, it highlights the most influential findings for understanding the relative differences that exist between government and private schools. The chapter begins by defining low-fee private education. This is followed by a review of studies conducted in the developing world by highlighting the key factors that shape private school choice, and the differences that exists between them. This is followed by an analysis of theories that inform both access to and the purpose of education, before I finally present the concepts that have emerged from these theories, which I use to analyse the data in chapters five, six, and seven. The next section sets out to clarify the definitional issues surrounding low-fee private schooling research.

3.2 Defining low-fee private education

Private education provision is widespread in developing countries. In the past, these private schools have often been provided and funded by churches. However, in recent years defining what private school are, and are not, has become very complex due to their increased heterogeneity (Kitaev, 2007, 1999). Nevertheless, Kitaev has supplied a definition of private schools based on the International Institute for Educational Planning and UNESCO study on private schooling in Asia and Africa:

> An institution is classified as private if it is controlled and managed by a non-governmental organisation (e.g. church, trade union, business enterprise, etc.), or if its governing board consists mostly of members not selected by a public agency. … The most common definition of a private school is one that is not managed by a state or public authority (Kitaev 2007:92).

This means that private schools operate under conditions that differ considerably from those facing their government counterparts. However, the definition does not specify other conditions characterising low-fee private schools and private schools in general. This is due to the non-standardised nature of the low-fee schooling sector on one hand, and the heterogeneous, numerous, and country-specificity on the other. According to

Srivastava (2013a), the key characteristics of low-fee private schools that distinguish them from their elite counterparts is that they are independently funded through lower tuition fees and are accessed by disadvantaged or poor households, though not necessarily the poorest or most disadvantaged. Other characteristics highlighted by Srivastava include:

> private schools which are independently managed and owned by a single owner or a team; comprises of family members; might be recognised or unrecognised; in urban, peri-urban, rural environments; part of a chain or single operator' (2013a:12)

The low-fee sector could operate at the primary or at multiple levels for different motives and is likely to be governed by differing regulations. I need to draw attention at this stage to the fact that the state has sole regulatory power and controls all state and non-state education provision. However, this control could be limited in some contexts. For example, the government of Ghana struggles to regulate the fixing of fees charged by private education providers (MOE/GES, 2001), as many are unregistered and difficult to track (MOESS, 2006).

While one can appreciate the complexity surrounding the definition of low-fee private schools, the low-fee private school sector in Ghana, which this thesis studies, has not officially been defined by the government. Therefore, in the context of this thesis, I adopt Srivastava's (2013a) definition above and define low-fee private schools as private schools which are independently owned and managed by a single owner, family, or church; recognised; in an inner-city environment; targeting the relatively rich disadvantaged group; and entirely financed through tuition, feeding, and extra class fees at the basic level. I will be using terms 'private' and 'low-fee private' schools interchangeably, with both referring to private schools in an inner-city environment. What follows is a review of government and low-fee schools in the developing world context.

3.3 Low-fee private schooling: Evidence from developing countries

Non-government schools are proliferating around the world, but the percentage increase in developing countries is higher than in developed countries (UNESCO, 2008). In 2012, the enrolment of children in primary schools was a record 13% in developing countries as compared to 5% in developed countries (GCE, 2016). The greater proportion of this increase has to do with the emergence and scale of low-fee private schools, which have become part and parcel of education provision in the developing world (Macpherson et

al., 2014). Verger et al. (2016) put forward six possible explanations for privatisation in different countries. Three of these factors are related to the developing world context: privatisation by default in low-income countries as evidenced by the surge of low-fee private schools in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, secondly, public-private partnerships, and privatisation by way of catastrophe as exemplified in Haiti. There are several other reasons for the surge in low-fee private schools in the developing world. For the purposes of this literature review, I will focus on the studies that summarise findings in terms of supply and demand factors and their relationship with private school attendance. What follows is a review of the literature examining the underlying reasons behind this phenomenon in the developing world context.

3.3.1 Reasons behind the surge in low-fee private schools in the developing world

Inadequate government school supply and funding due to the expansion of basic education has led to greater demand for places at the basic school level (Stern and Heyneman, 2013). In their study of slum and non-slum communities in Nairobi, Kenya, Oketch et al. (2010) found that inadequate government school supply was the reason for the surge in private schools, defining this phenomenon as excess demand. They went on to argue that many poorer families who might have benefited from the free government school policy found they were pushed out. As such, they had no option but to enrol in low-fee private schools. This finding is supported by Srivastava (2013a) who assert that in some instances, families are obligated to travel through risky areas to reach a free government school. As such, they register in a nearby private school for safety. Based on her exploration of government and private schools in Pakistan, Aslam (2009) concluded that the fastest growth of low-fee private schools was found in rural areas where there were a limited number of government schools. Much of the same applies to other African and Asian countries (Tooley et al., 2005; Rose and Adelabu, 20007). The foregoing literature has shown that the likely consequence of inadequate supply of government schools in a country could be the proliferation of private schools to meet demand.

Other researchers have noted that low quality of government provision played a critical role in the growth of private schools in developing countries (Stern and Heyneman, 2013; Ahmed et al. 2014; Akyeampong and Rolleston, 2013). In their study on the growth of private schools in the Jamaican context, Stern and Heyneman (2013) found that dissatisfaction with the ineffective government school system led some parents to access low-fee private schools. They found that parents and private school proprietors described

the beneficial features of private schools as having smaller classes, individualised attention, and offering extra and effective support for children described as slow learners within the government school system. Positive relationships between at-risk students and private schools were found to be important for choosing private schools in South Africa (Reschovsky, 2006; Chisholm, 2004). Using household survey data, Oketch et al. (2010) examined transfer between government and private schools and found that discipline and better teacher performance were reasons for pro-private school transfer. They argued that despite free compulsory basic education, parents were searching for quality schools for their children. Dixon et al. (2017) have argued that parents in Lagos are cognisant of the quality crisis in government schools. Using a household survey of 556 children accessing government and low-cost private primary schools, they found a statistically significant preference for private schools when quality, defined as teaching and school leadership, were considered. Nevertheless, Baird (2009) found in his study of India that supply-side factors have a less significant association with private school enrolment. Rather, it was parental aspirations for better education and future career opportunities that induced demand for private schools. He also noted that private enrolment was a result of parents' lower expectations of government schools.

Interestingly, Dixon et al. (2017) stressed the fact that parents actively searched for a wide range of sources of information before deciding to access private schools. However, Fennell et al.'s (2010) qualitative study on Ghana and Pakistan contradicts this finding, noting that the major concern raised by the young children they interviewed was that parents were not fully informed about the true nature of government and private schools. Differentiated demand based on religion is reported to be critical to the intention to access low-fee private schools in nearly every country in the world (Stern and Heyneman, 2013). As noted by Stern and Heyneman (2013), religion is the primary reason why parents in Indonesia might opt for private schools and there is a whole government ministry responsible for 90% of all private schools. Another study confirmed the importance of religion as a reason parents might choose low-fee private schools in Tanzania and Pakistan (Marshall, 2010). It is believed in these contexts that religious private schools play a very important role in children's future development.

It is important to distinguish between the reasons discussed above, namely, inadequate government school supply, quality concerns, and differentiated demand. Wolf et al. (2005) note that differentiated demand as a standalone reason does not automatically

explain why the public sector is not meeting its goals of providing education to every child. They maintain that the growth of private schooling in some contexts, for example in Latin America, seldom arises as a result of a single determinant factor so far as accessing a good and flourishing government school alternative is concerned. They conclude that the reason behind the growth of private schools in most Latin American countries is an inadequate supply of good quality government schools, as well as differentiated demand.

There also appear to be ideological reasons behind the growth of private schools in developing countries. The ideological position relates to the appropriateness and relevance of these schools to meeting the Education for All (EFA) goals since their emergence in the late 90's (Tooley, 1999; Probe Team, 1999; Kitaev, 1999; Kingdon, 1996a,b; Tooley and Dixon, 2003). One side of the debate supports the view that private schools are great assets, as they help relieve pressure on government finances by partly meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (World Bank, 2002; International Finance Corporation, 2002). On the other hand, it is argued that the abolition of school fees in government schools adversely affects the overall quality of public schools that serve the poor (Tooley and Dixon, 2003). In this sense, the low-fee private schools are alternative to state schools that provide better quality of education to more poor households at an affordable price (Tooley and Dixon, 2003).

Conversely, other education professionals take issue to why private schools should be involved in the provision of education, which is a public good (Lewin, 2007; Colclough, 1996, 1997). Therefore, governments should be responsible for providing quality education to meet the needs of the poor and vulnerable people in society. The recognition of education as a human right provides a major argument in support of the state providing and maintaining schools for the poor and vulnerable. For this reason, some analysts are concerned about private sector involvement in providing education, which is a public good, especially in circumstances where they are subsidised with taxpayer money or by donors (Day Ashley et al., 2014). Instead, this money should be spent in providing quality education that improves the learning outcomes of the poor and the most vulnerable (UNESCO, 2014, 2009).

Quality, equity, cost-effectiveness, and financial sustainability should be ensured in circumstances and contexts where the private sector might contribute to the education access of the poor and vulnerable (Rose, 2006; EFA, 2000). In this sense, private schools

might operate in partnership with the state to provide quality education to the poor. The most important issue underlying the philosophical debate on private schooling in developing countries relates to whether private schools are affordable to all households who prefer private schools. The literature review now moves on to discuss the main findings and analyses regarding who accesses low-fee private schools and whether it is affordable to all.

3.3.2 Affordability and choice of low-fee private schools

Research in developing countries regarding affordability of low-fee private schools is highly contested. Several studies categorise children who attend low-fee private schools as first-generation learners whose parents come from a lower educational background relative to more advantaged and richer households (Dixon et al., 2017; Riep, 2014). Affordability is regarded as an issue for schooling choice. Stern and Heyneman (2013) argue that poor and economically disadvantaged households rarely enrol their children in private schools. This is confirmed in Ghana and Kenya, where children from poorer backgrounds are less likely to attend private schools (Akaguri, 2014; Nishimura and Yamano, 2013). Similarly, Siaplay and Werker (2013) found an association between wealth and the likelihood enrolment for six- to nineteen-year-old children in Liberia. Using principal component analysis to explore combined factors explaining enrolment, they found that the higher a family's economic well-being, as indicated by fathers' occupation and education, the higher the likelihood of attending low-fee private/mission schools.

Using cross-county data, Stern and Heyneman's (2013) secondary review of low-fee private schooling in six developing countries found a 10-11% private primary school enrolment rate for the two lowest economic quintiles in Jamaica in 2007, and just 10% of children from disadvantaged households attending private schools in Pakistan. Some evidence suggests that the poorest of the poor households are more likely to attend unrecognised private schools in urban and rural India (Baird, 2009). Using nationally representative data covering every region and state of India, he utilised a micro-level analysis of independent variables such as government spending on education, political opinion, and cultural and economic factors to determine their associations with private school attendance, and found that private schools were preferred by many poorer households. However, this does not mean that poor households who access private schools could easily afford to pay fees (Akaguri, 2014). Using interviews and surveys,

Akaguri (2014) found that poorer households in rural and peri-urban areas in Mfantsipim cut back on household expenditure so they can pay for their children's school fees. This is not an isolated finding. Evidence suggests that disadvantaged households must contend with hidden and prohibitive schooling costs irrespective of the type of school they find themselves in (Akyeampong and Rolleston, 2013). It is well documented that while private schools cater for relatively better-off families (Muralidharan and Kremer, 2008), disadvantaged children who come from households that participate in the informal sector, have lower-paid jobs, have irregular income, and are affected by migration equally access private schools (Akyeampong and Rolleston, 2013; Akaguri, 2011b; Härmä 2011a).

A recent review analysis of survey and randomised trial studies on countries such as India, Kenya, Sri Lanka, and Uganda found access to schooling to be based on the costs involved in schooling (Siddhu, 2010). In Ghana, Akyeampong's (2009) analysis of the FCUBE policy revealed favourable school participation among the relatively better-off households, while disadvantaged children were found to be over-aged, enrolling late, or engaged in child labour. This supports Lewin's (2007) observation that insufficient government school provision in an area where low-cost private schools dominate might exclude disadvantaged children from access to schooling. Lewin's (2007) analysis focused on demographic health survey household data of twenty-three countries in sub-Saharan Africa and concluded that participation in primary and secondary schools was predominantly determined by gender, household income, and location. This was confirmed in Liberia by Siaplay and Werker (2013), who found that living in rural areas and being poorer increases the likelihood of attending government schools, whereas the opposite is true for richer households living in urban areas. However, studies in Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania found that there was no significant difference in the percentage of girls and boys attending private schools (Hartwig, 2013; Tooley et al., 2008; Tooley et al., 2007).

Previous studies have concentrated on gender and religion and the likelihood of attending government or private schools (Mehrotra and Panchamukhi, 2006; Härmä, 2011c). Mehrotra and Panchamukhi (2006) employed household survey data comprising a sample of more than 1000 schools and 120,000 households covering over 91 in India districts and found that private school enrolment was skewed against caste-based and gender equity in enrolment. In her later quantitative study of low-fee schools in Uttar Pradesh in India, Härmä (2009) argued that low-fee private schools were not accessible to poor rural

households. Using a 13-village survey of 250 households and visits to 26 government and private schools, she concluded that over half of her sampled households, mainly low-caste and Muslim families, could not afford to send their children to low-fee private schools. While the low-fee sector has contributed to the promotion of EFA goals for the relatively richer quintile of the poverty index, Härmä (2009) points out that what poorer households prefer is a well-functioning government school system that could be accessed for free.

Attempts have been made to balance inequity in schooling access in favour of girls from disadvantaged backgrounds, however. In Pakistan, a subsidy arrangement was made to offer poor girls access to low-fee private schools in Balochistan Province between 1995 and 1999 (Alderman et al., 2003). However, this arrangement was not sustainable without compromising on class size, fees, and teachers' salaries (Alderman et al., 2003).

Limited affordability does not deter disadvantaged households in Andhra Pradesh and South Africa to aspire to attend private schools even when they know they cannot afford the fees associated with it (Day Ashley et al., 2014, Singh and Sarkar, 2012; Härmä 2011b; Schirmer, 2010). Singh and Sarkar (2012) indicated that parents who had children in government schools displayed a sense of powerlessness in not being able to send their children to private schools that cater for disadvantaged households. Nevertheless, Dixon et al. (2017) in their study of low-fee private and government schools in Lagos report that disadvantaged households in Lagos are demanding access to low-fee schools. Based on data from 556 children in 325 households, Dixon et al. (2017) argue that improved economic well-being of households increases the chances of private school attendance. However, the government schools studied form just 5% of their data.

These findings regarding affordability of private schools are corroborated in other statistical analyses from India. Drawing on household survey data of 250 villages in rural India and parental interviews, Härmä (2011d) argues that there was a near universal expression of preference for private school enrolment. However, she argues that a greater percentage of children were enrolled in government schools due to parental poverty and their inability to pay fees associated with private schools (Härmä, 2011d). Akyeampong and Rolleston's (2013) study on poor households in Mfansteman revealed interesting ploys private school owners use to induce or sustain demand, including projecting an image of affordability through flexible fee payment policies. Using Ghana Living Standard Survey and Education Maintenance and Information data, they found that fees

were a factor in determining who goes to private schools at the basic level. Härmä (2009) highlighted the lengths to which the poorer parents she studied went to access private schools, including cutting back on clothing, healthcare, and livelihood inputs so they could pay for private school fees. Given the high private school fees, some poor families who had their children in private schools had to borrow huge amounts of money to pay fees for fear of their children being withdrawn, suspended, or punished for fee arrears or non-payment (Akaguri, 2014). Härmä and Adefisayo's (2013) study in Nigeria finds that private school owners project a positive enrolment image for poorer children, allowing them to stay in school despite non-payment of fees. However, they argued that parents would be expected to pay the deferred fees at a later date (Härmä and Adefisayo, 2013). Subsequent studies have concentrated on the need to see disadvantage and vulnerability as relational, dynamic, multi-dimensional, and characterised by intersections of multiple deprivations where household income and economic circumstances form just one factor of disadvantage (Chege and Arnot, 2012; Kabeer, 2000). Key analyses of the characteristics of households accessing private schooling cited migration, malnutrition, and sustained exclusion as factors that further created inequalities in schooling participation/drop-out and access to low-fee private schools (Ananga, 2010; Buxton, 2011, Cameron, 2010; Akyeampong, 2009; Lewin, 2007). The studies reviewed above seem to indicate a perceived higher preference for low-fee private schools in the developing country context. If this is the case, then private schools might be of superior quality than their government counterparts, and children who access government schools might receive poorer quality education. Whether private schools are superior to government schools remains to be reviewed in the next section, which I now turn to.

3.4 Are private schools better in quality to government schools in similar communities?

Several authors have argued that disadvantaged families are aware of and well-informed about the perceived superiority of low-fee private schools to government ones (Dixon et al., 2017; Dixon et al., 2013). This section reviews the literature that compares government and private schools in the developing world context. It reviews inputs, achievement, and quality perceptions of private and government schools.

3.4.1 Are inputs in private schools better to those in government schools?

Several studies have focused on inputs across government and private schools serving the poor and seem to indicate mixed results. In Ghana, Akaguri (2011a, b) found in a deprived

area of Mfansteman District that government schools had better inputs (training level of teachers; teaching and learning materials) and infrastructure (quality of school building), than their private counterparts. However, the pupil-teacher ratios were higher in the public schools he studied at primary and JHS level (Akaguri, 2011b). Using pupil-teacher ratio as a proxy for quality, he found that 31 out of the 53 educationally deprived government schools he studied had ratios higher than the Ministry of Education's policy of 35:1 at the primary level and 25:1 at the JHS level. Conversely, most of the private schools were within the recommended limit, apart from six of the districts, where the pupil/teacher ratio ranged from 44:1 to 108:1. Similarly, Ngware et al.'s (2010) study favoured government schools regarding teacher qualifications, pupil-textbook ratios, and building facilities, but private schools were better in terms of pupil-teacher and pupil-toilet ratios. In many African and Asian countries, Tooley and Dixon (2006, 2005b, 2007) indicated that private schools fared relatively better on classrooms, drinking water, toilets, and observed 'teaching activity'. Strangely, Glewwe and Jacoby (1994) found in Ghana that what mattered in terms of improving quality was repairs to school buildings, which they thought to be more important than inputs such as teacher quality, books, and desks. In a later work, Glewwe (1999) highlighted the positive relationship between pupil cognitive achievement and classroom repairs and the provision of textbooks, which he thought were more important than the construction of classrooms.

A study in India – more specifically Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan – revealed that private schools paid teachers poorly due to inadequate income and attracted poorly qualified staff with high teacher turnover (De et al., 2002). In some contexts, all of the teachers were untrained and received only one-tenth of the salary government teachers received. Härmä (2009) focused on ten low-fee primary schools, both recognised and unrecognised, and found that just 34% of the teachers had secondary schooling, and that the most disadvantaged children accessed government schools which were of even lower quality than the low-fee private schools (Härmä, 2009). Other studies found no significant differences between the two types of schools in terms of infrastructure. For example, Muralidharan and Kremer's (2008) study, which used a nationally representative survey of rural primary schools, found no significant difference in infrastructure between the two school types. Teachers in the government schools received five times the salary received by teachers in the low-fee private schools (Muralidharan and Kremer, 2008). Most researchers found that fees were kept low in the low-fee private schools and that the little

fees they received covered recurrent costs such as teachers' salaries (Ohara, 2013; Härmä, 2009; Rose and Adelabu, 2007).

Teacher attendance and children's time spent on tasks in the classroom environment could also be a measure of quality. Dunne and Leach (2005) found in Botswana that there was lack of professionalism among teachers who taught in low-performing schools. Many of the teachers they studied had problems with turning up to school, and even when they did, they were not engaging with the children. This was probably due to poor teacher knowledge of the subject matter and inadequate resources (Abadzi, 2009) and/or ineffective classroom management in general (Alhassan and Adzahlie-Mensah, 2010; Akyeampong et al., 2007). This lack of professional practices can result in fewer lessons being taught in a school day (Akyeampong et al., 2007), although this is predominantly an occurrence in rural government schools (Akaguri, 2011a).

Previous studies have concentrated on student background, teacher salary, and pupil-teacher ratio. Jimenez, Lockheed, and Paqueo's (1991) study of schools in Tanzania and Colombia found a private school advantage after controlling for student background, teacher salary, and pupil-teacher ratio. They used two questionnaires. One was for school administration information, which asked questions about the quality of facilities such as student-teacher ratio and teacher salary. The other was related to information on students' family background, demographics, and financial school spending variables. The Colombian data set covered 129 secondary schools and 4,033 students, while the Tanzanian data covered 4,181 students in 57 schools. They indicated that students' performance was affected by the measured school inputs. They concluded that the private schools' advantage was larger than the government schools', and this was empirically important given that human capital was a function of performance.

Jimenez, Lockheed, Luna, and Paqueo (1991) replicated this study in the Dominican Republic, using a sample of 2,472 children in 76 urban schools, including non-elite schools. Unlike Jimenez, Lockheed, and Paqueo's (1991) earlier study, however, this study had an important feature of distinguishing between two types of private schools: high status and low status private schools. Jimenez, Lockheed, Luna, and Paqueo (1991) then fitted choice equations for the government and private school sectors. In the low status private schools, no teacher or teaching variable was significant. However, in the government school sector, teacher variables were significant, and teacher and teaching variables were both significant in the elite private school sector. However, when average

pre-test score and average parental education were added to the equation, the private school advantage reduced significantly.

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) (2016) linked school facilities to student experiences in different contexts. Generally, private schools had smaller class sizes and had more facilities. However private schools in slums lacked electricity. In some contexts, boys and girls shared the same latrines in private schools, while children with physical disabilities were less likely to attend private schools (GCE, 2016). In Kenya, Ngware et al. (2010) studied 41 government schools and 43 private schools and found that government schools had larger class sizes, with larger student-teacher ratios and less working space for students. Consequently, teachers in government schools were overburdened. Akaguri (2011b) confirmed this for Ghana but found government schoolteachers to be better trained than their private school counterparts. Similarly, Bhatta (2014) found in Nepal that private school households linked smaller student-teacher ratios to greater individual attention and student-teacher interaction. In Bangladesh, private schools had a student-teacher ratio of 18:1 as compared with government schools' ratio of 85:1 (DFID, 2013). However, Reip (2015) found that private schools in the Philippines operated in rented commercial buildings with no or limited access to recreational, laboratory, and library facilities. In Bangladesh, only 19% of private schools had a playground, compared with 50% of government schools (DFID, 2013).

3.4.2 Does achievement in government and private schools differ?

A direct measurement of educational achievement in terms of outcome or output is examination results (Ankomah et al., 2005). Examination results can be a perfectly proper quality proxy of school success, as they are meant to indicate how well or how much students have learnt what they have been taught in school (Gorard, 2010a). However, Kingdon's (1996) research on India discovered unacceptable examination malpractice, including cheating, results tampering, and copying. Nevertheless, there is a plethora of possible reasons why schools could be judged based on how well children perform in tests or examinations. First, parents and students might want to use a kind of school quality measure to inform the schooling choices they make. Second, policymakers will be keen to know how well the education system is working, and how effective reforms have been. Hanushek and Kimko (2000) discovered that test or examination results are positively correlated with economic growth in cross-country studies.

Some studies evaluated quality in terms of relative test or examination results between government and private schools for the poor. Akaguri (2011a, b) compared the Basic Education Certificate Examination results of government and low-fee private schools and found mixed results. Thus, the differences were not consistently or significantly different between the two types of schools. Akaguri (2011a, b) observed that some private school did better, but others performed worse than some of the public schools he studied, whereas some public schools performed as well as the private schools. Focusing on public schools only, Ghanney and Aniagyei (2014) found in three selected government JHSs in the Obuasi Municipality that significant percentages of students failed the BECE examinations in three conservative years. The failure rate ranged from 10-70%. They explained that processes such as discipline and home and parental attitude and supervision, as well as inputs (human and material resources, individual differences between students) significantly and moderately contributed to the poor academic performance of the students.

Dixon et al. (2013) discovered a private school advantage in test scores on mathematics and Kiswahili in Nairobi, Kenya for non-elite low-fee private schools in three slums, and three non-slum publicly funded schools, using a sample of 3330 children in primary 6. Using factor analysis, they controlled for background variables to assess the relative quality of these types of schools, which served mainly low-income families, in respect of pupil achievement. Two important features of this study were that they found no significant difference in English performance, and girls performed better than boys in all the tests. When other factors, such as family income, IQ, sex, and age were added to the model, the private school advantage decreased for Kiswahili for boys, and the attainment gap between boys and girls also diminished. Subsequent studies concentrated on controlling for other variables in addition to type of school. Using a national survey to compare school types in 30 villages each in every district in India, Pratham (2010) controlled for language proficiency and other parental characteristics of government and private school children. She found 8.6 percentage points in favour of private schools for learning outcomes. However, when private tuition, father's education, and mother's education were added to the equation, the learning differentials drastically decreased from 8.6% to 2.9% overall. Additionally, in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Madhya Pradesh, she found a negative association between local language achievement and private school attendance. Based on these findings, she concluded that while private

schools generally performed marginally better on local languages in some districts, this did not apply in all the districts she studied.

Higher cognitive achievement has been observed in private schools in Colombia and Tanzania, where government schools performed better in non-academic specialised subjects, such as technical and vocational subjects. Psacharapoulos (1987) used pupil-level regression to examine differences between public and private schools in Colombia and Tanzania, controlling for student ability and socio-economic background. His findings were mixed in the sense that in both countries, private school students outperformed their government school peers on academic achievement, whereas government school students did better on technical subjects. He therefore concluded that perhaps parental pressure, defined as social demand (higher level of opportunities after graduation), makes private schools overly emphasise academic subjects.

Differences in achievement between public and two categories of private schools – elite and non-elite – were discovered by Jimenez, Lockheed, Luna, and Paqueo (1991) in their study on the Dominican Republic, focusing on 2,472 students in 76 urban schools. They noted a private school advantage, though this was explained by lack of classrooms or by school variables. No teaching or teacher variables were statistically significant in the non-elite private schools, only one was significant in the public schools, and two were significant in the elite private schools. Interestingly, when average years of parental education and pre-test scores were added into the model, the private school advantage disappeared.

Using a multivariate analysis, Govinda and Verghese (1991) studied differences in achievement between public, private unaided, and private aided schools in five districts in Madhya Pradesh. They analysed the language and mathematics competency levels of 2,159 children who were at the end of primary school in 59 schools. After controlling for background characteristics of the children, those in the private unaided schools scored relatively higher in mathematics and language than those in the public and the private aided schools. They also discovered a private school advantage after adjusting for school inputs, such as availability of textbooks, teacher status, and teacher qualifications. In some instances, the perceptions people hold regarding private school advantage are not based on reality. This is what the next section focuses on.

3.4.3 Perceptions of private school advantage and outstanding issues

Evidence from Africa and Asia, drawing on interviews and surveys, seemed to indicate that perceptions (not reality) of private schools' high quality lead some households to access them. In Mfantseman District in the Central Region of Ghana, Akaguri (2014, 2011a, b) interviewed 38 household heads and concluded that the majority of them believed that private schools were of better quality than government schools. Their perceptions were not consistent with examination results but were deeply held. Interestingly, Fennell (2013) challenges these quality perceptions of disadvantaged households, arguing that most poor parents lack the ability to judge the quality of a school due to their baseline personal experiences of not ever having been students. However, Akyeampong and Rolleston's (2013) interviews of stakeholders revealed that private schools have superior marketing strategies and project a superior image, which makes them look better than government schools, even though they do not necessarily provide higher quality education. Drawing on surveys in Kenya, Oketch et al. (2010) found that perceptions of high level of discipline and high school and/or teacher performance in private schools were key reasons behind transfers to private schools from government schools or other private schools. Perception of quality teaching were found to be a reason why parents chose private schools in Andhra Pradesh, India (Singh and Sarkar, 2012). This was later corroborated by Galab et al.'s (2013) study, which demonstrated that parental schooling aspirations, as defined by future occupation and educational attainment in general, are drivers of private school demand in the same region of India.

Dysfunctionality in the government sector is also seen as motivating factor for households' private school choice in India. In Lucknow, Srivastava's (2008, 2006) research shows that perceptions of quality could sometimes be affected by ideological beliefs, prestige, marriage prospects, peer pressure, and labour market aspirations. Additionally, all parents interviewed perceived private schools as offering better quality education to their children, relative to government schools where teachers were perceived to be loafing (Srivastava, 2008). Quality perceptions in India leading households to desire or opt for private schools are popular to the extent that they are becoming the default (Johnson and Bowels, 2010). Therefore, concerns have been raised that such aspirations for better quality schools could potentially reinforce existing social inequalities (Rao, 2010; Stash and Hannum, 2001). Assumed labour market returns, cost of marriage, and patrilineal marriage customs in African and Indian contexts might lead to boys attending

private schools at the expense of girls (Cameron, 2010; Härmä, 2009; De et al., 2002). This confirms Tooley and Dixon's (2006) finding in Andhra Pradesh, that boys were more likely to attend private schools than government schools. This implies that girls are condemned to attend government schools, which are perceived to be of lower quality than private schools. It also means that children of relatively poorer socio-economic background, lower class, and lower caste are also pushed to the education fringes (Noronha and Srivastava, 2012; Härmä, 2009; De et al., 2002). Other researchers disagree with private school superiority and contend that in some contexts, neither type of school can provide quality education (Muzaffar, 2012; Srivastava, 2013a; Akaguri, 2011a, b; DFID, 2013). For example, in Nigeria, DFID (2013) found that private schools were as bad as government schools.

Recognition and/or registration status signal whether a school meets the required standard as defined by teacher qualification, basic infrastructure, and curriculum. However, these are not always accurate markers. Studies show that low-fee private schools in some contexts gained recognition status through bribery and other unapproved practices (Tooley and Dixon 2005a; Srivastava, 2008; Ohara, 2013). Srivastava (2013a) notes that this creates a system of shady practices and unofficial rules which undermine basic regulatory systems and quality standards.

In Nigeria, Härmä and Adefisayo (2013) argue many low-fee private schools operate underground without meeting set regulations due to challenging government regulatory mechanisms. This has potential implications for low-fee private schools. Under the Right to Education Act in Delhi, India, private schools are compelled to register, or face being closed (Ohara, 2013). However, some private schools are able to provide official documents without having gone through formal government processes (Ohara, 2013).

Although evidence is limited, some studies reveal differences in teacher characteristics, behaviour, and practices between government and private schools. Teacher absenteeism tended to be lower in private schools than in government schools. Akaguri (2011b) found in Ghana that instructional time was lost in government schools due to tardiness and absenteeism, with students being taught two out of ten subjects on average. Similarly, teacher time spent on tasks and contact time tended to be higher in private schools (Akyeampong and Rolleston, 2013; Fennell, 2013; Härmä and Adefisayo, 2013). Furthemrore, in Bangladesh, the teacher absenteeism rate in government schools is 13% while private schools have regular attendance records and favourable classroom contact

time (Sommers, 2013). These patterns are widespread in Kenya (Stern and Heyneman 2013) and in other developing countries (Abadzi, 2009). These practices have several implications for students' learning. For example, teacher absenteeism could negatively impact on children's academic performance (Alhassan and Adzahlie-Mensah, 2010).

Teacher attention and effort were also higher in private schools as compared to government schools. Private school head teachers interviewed in Mfansteman District of Ghana reported that teachers spent extra time to coach students and used innovative learning material to complement government-approved textbooks (Akaguri, 2011b). This concurred with Stern and Heyneman's (2013) study on Kenya which found that private school teachers spent quality time with students. Likewise, in Nigeria, Rolleston and Adefeso-Olateju (2014) found private school teachers to be approachable and caring, as well as trying new ways to ensure students mastered the necessary material to get into government secondary schools.

In Nepal, teachers, students, parents, and administrators in private schools felt teaching and learning process were practical: teachers asked questions, were more practically oriented, and used a variety of learning materials (Bhatta, 2014). In Pakistan, private school teachers were spontaneous in identifying students' needs and good at managing the classroom environment (Fennell, 2013). In contrast to this, government schoolteachers were generally found not checking students' homework, giving them practice problems, or revising their assignments (Bhatta, 2014).

There were differences in perceived teacher motivation in government and private schools. In rural Bangladesh, Sommers's (2013) in-depth qualitative study of 26 schools found private school teachers were motivated to teach although they were poorly paid. They appreciated the fact that at least they had a job to go to. Elsewhere in Kenya, Ngware et al. (2010) found that smaller class sizes and manageable workloads motivated private school teachers. This was confirmed by Tooley et al. (2008) who argued that having motivated teachers was one of the key reasons why households might choose private schools. Higher motivation was not consistent in all private schools, however. Teachers in Bridge International Academy in Kenya felt they rather would prefer working in government schools where they would have job security, better working hours, more autonomy, and higher salaries and remunerations (EI, 2016).

The literature reviewed above draws attention to the implications of the various forms of disadvantages with regards to access to education. It also highlights the kinds of barriers some groups of disadvantaged children face in accessing education. Not all school-going children are able to choose and access government schools for free due to the lack of availability of government schools. In contexts where government schools do exist, the perception some households have about them is abysmal. The bias always points towards private schools, which many prefer although in most cases the perceptions do not match this claim. Most importantly, when government and private schools are compared, schooling processes, such as classroom and schooling experiences, and children's aspirations are not considered. In the few cases where these are ascertained, evidence is based on the perceptions of parents. Few studies employ classroom observation. None of the above studies has consistently looked at schooling choice, experiences, and aspirations in one single study. This is a cause of concern, especially if every child is to meet the target of good quality education (UNESCO, 2014) to promote social justice. In seeking to understand and contextualise social justice, the next section considers ideas about what constitutes good education with regards to children's schooling participation.

Generally, low-fee private school teachers are hired by informal agreements and on fixed-term contracts (Srivastava, 2013a). This implies that they have no job security nor a stable salary with favourable job conditions, yet they are held accountable for students' learning and can be dismissed for absenteeism or poor performance. For this reason, private school teachers tend to leave their positions once they get a better job in the government sector (Amjad and MacLeod, 2014). Teacher turnover has implications for students' experiences and aspirations. Fennell (2013) conducted focus groups with students in urban areas of Pakistan and noted that concerns were raised about high teacher turnover and the fluidity of new teachers joining the school. Conversely, government schoolteachers tend to have better employment conditions, including not being dismissed unless necessary. Government schoolteachers are not held responsible for students' exams performance or graduation (Bruns et al., 2011). At worst, mediocre teachers are transferred to different districts, but this has adverse effects on children's learning (Broekman, 2013).

It is important to reiterate that low-fee private schools, which are neo-liberal in nature, have emerged in developing countries in order to provide increased access to schools. Private schools are also promoted when there is an increased demand for the government to manage, so low-fee private schools provide a key service towards the achievement of

the Education for All goals. At the same time, low-fee private schools supposedly offer superior and quality education for those who can afford it. However, Srivastava (2013a) raises concerns around what was measured by the research supporting this view, and whether the focus of such studies contradicts the purpose of education. As will be seen below, introduction of schooling process variables into the debate is necessary to achieve social justice in education.

3.5 The role of education and a framework towards education and social justice

Many authors have interpreted the role or purpose of education in society, reflecting competing ontologies (Drèze and Sen, 2002; Biesta, 2009; Robeyns, 2006). Nevertheless, the perceived goals of education are wide-ranging, constituting serving the needs of industry, social control, knowledge transmission, and human flourishing (Hart, 2012). In this sense, Tikly (2011), focusing on colonial influence on education, argues that there should be an ongoing discussion about context-specific and democratically sound purposes of education.

Biesta (2009:39) for example outlines three different but related functions of education, namely, ‘qualification’, ‘socialisation’, and ‘subjectification’. The qualification function provides individuals with knowledge, skills, and understanding, which equip them to make judgements and enables them to have specific jobs or professions. The qualification function also plays a role in preparing a workforce to contribute to the economic growth of a nation, as well as in providing individuals with knowledge and skills for other aspects of life, such as politics, citizenship, cultural literacy, and skills considered to be important for functioning in society more generally (Biesta, 2009). It is also crucial to people’s standard of living, and their ability to move themselves and their families out of poverty (Robeyns, 2006). To this end, current trends in Ghana education policy are driven by the government’s instrumental goal (Rolleston, 2009; Mankoe, 1994) of ensuring that the manpower needs of the country’s industries are met. This goes against Tagore’s (1999) argument that children need to have freedom through schooling instead of being categorised within the narrow bounds of conversional professions. This raises a concern regarding the validity of certain kinds of studies which only analyse examination results as a proxy for learning.

The second function Biesta (2009) outlines is the socialisation function. This function relates to the various ways in which, through schooling, one can become a member and

part of a specific political, social, and cultural element. Through the socialisation function, education positions members of society into existing ways of doing and being, while playing a useful role in the perpetuation of culture and tradition. For example, some aspects of socialisation could be positive or negative but could be pursued actively by educational institutions for transmitting specific values and norms. However, through education, undesirable values and norms can be collectively challenged. For example, education can widen the opportunities for both men and women to be and do what they value, instead of following the dominant traditional socialisation rules (Tikly, 2011).

In addition to the qualification and socialisation functions of education, Biesta (2009) goes on to provide the last and final purpose of education, namely, subjectification, which he defines as the process of becoming a subject. Biesta also links the purposes, aims, and ends of education to the issue of the quality of subjectification, defined as:

> the kinds of subjectivities that are made possible because of a particular educational arrangements and configurations (Biesta 2009:41).

This implies that any type of education should always contribute to processes that allow individuals to be independent and more autonomous in their acting and thinking.

The forgoing discussion makes it clear that any good education policy should acknowledge not only one element of the purposes and aims of education, but all the different functions and potential purposes it provides to help individuals to have freedom to be what they value. Therefore, at the theoretical level, notions of schooling choice and assumptions which remain dominant need to be challenged, and alternative views need to be put forward (Tikly, 2011). This cannot be achieved without fully presenting and analysing the dominant theories – human capital, rights, and capability – and the roles they play in shaping education policy. As such, in the next section I review these three policies, which inform the framework I have adopted for this study and which I will use to analyse the fieldwork data. It is based on the idea that children have the right to basic education. However, certain individual and household characteristics determine whether a child will exercise their right to choose government or fee-paying private schools. Given the fee-paying nature of private schools, I hypothesise that they will offer better schooling experiences to households who access them. The framework also assumes that private and government school children have high schooling aspirations, defined as future career goals. However, children from both school management types encounter significant barriers that might prevent them from achieving social justice through education.

3.6 Education as human capital

This section reviews the three main theories that have informed education policies: the human capital, rights, and capabilities theories. It aims to only focus on these theories as they relate to education. First, therefore, a brief summary of the theories as they relate to education is provided. This is followed by a presentation of key differences that exist between them. Finally, a conceptual framework on which this study is framed is presented.

Human capital theory has been the dominant concept in the construction of the purpose of education (Tikly, 2010) and in shaping the policy debate of donor agencies in education and development, not least the World Bank's lending policy (Psacharopoulos, 1994). With regards to education, human capital theory postulates that capabilities and skills gained through education could be comparable to physical capital (Smith, 1776). This was empirically tested in Ghana after political independence which resulted in growth in access to education, as well as in other sub-Saharan African countries (Rolleston and Oketch 2008). Thus, investments in education and its productive capacities continue to shape international and domestic education policies (see chapter two).

The empirical foundation of human capital theory is the positive association between the number of years of education a person receives and his/her income level (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964). For example, Schultz (1961) referred to human capital as an investment people make in themselves. Human capital theory rests on the notion that individuals will be able to earn higher incomes in the future if they invest in education. It has also been argued that investment in education enhances skills development and creates a more productive work force that is better able to handle existing and new productive systems.

Human capital theory's adoption and application started in the USA and Europe but soon spread to developing countries (Szirmai, 1997), where education's links with development received considerable popularity (Krieger, 1988). As Szirmai (1997) pointed out, elites in developing countries who received their education during the colonial era were exposed to notions such as development, human rights, and nationalism. Having said this, he also stressed the fact that the type of education that these elites received limited their chances and opportunities to fully develop their talents (Szirmai, 1997). Consequently, there was a rapid improvement in access to education after independence. Human capital therefore was seen to have provided a framework for the systematic evaluation of the costs and benefits of different kinds of education

(Psacharopoulos, 1973; Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985). The costs of education that were highlighted included school fees, teaching materials, books, expenditure on food, school uniforms, and income foregone while schooling (Schultz, 1961). In relation to the total costs and benefits, the calculation of the average annual return on an education investment – 'rate of return' – is essential (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985:30).

The measurement of human capital is based on the difference between the lifetime income of a person with a given amount of education and their lifetime income had he/she had no education (Schultz, 1961). Thus, economic outcome is considered more than learning outcome (Bennell, 1996). This is supported by economists who work within the human capital framework such as Hanushek and Woßmann (2008), Vegas and Petrow (2008), , who have started to comment on quality of education. The rationale behind emphasising quality of education within the human capital approach is manifold. First, quality education is an important tool that can reduce poverty (Hanushek and Woßmann, 2008). Therefore, the benefit of the quality of education outweighs that of the quantity of education. Second, quality education, as measured by standardised tests, has the potential to impart skills and transform the individual more than simply making them spend years in school. Finally, there is an expected strong relationship between education, learning, and national growth rate, which Psacharopoulos and Tilak (1992) believe is universal and well recognised beyond doubt. However, it is well noted that countries with the highest levels of inequality in their education system experience the slowest gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates (Wils et al., 2005; Bennell, 1996).

In many sub-Saharan countries, human capital analysis may show a glowing wage effect of human capital, but less than 16% of the entire labour force are in wage employment (Rolleston, 2009). Further, nearly half of Ghanaian wage employees work in public services, where there may be a weak link between productivity and earning (Rolleston, 2009). Other researchers have looked at returns to education based on income earned in self-employment occupations such as agriculture (Kingdon and Soderbom, 2007; Lockheed and Bruns 1990; Jamison and Lau, 1982). For example, it is claimed that education is almost equally useful in Ghana for both self-employment and public service employment (Teal, 2001). Teal's (2001) findings have been reviewed by Kingdon and Soderbom (2007), whose study found lower returns for self-employment and agriculture than for wage employment.

The human capital approach makes fundamental assumptions that justify the links between education, productivity, and economic development. First, the human capital route to professionalism assumes that education provides specific training required for professional skills and practice, as literate personnel are more productive than those who are not (Szirmai, 1997). Second, education leads to changed attitudes and broaden the options available to the individual and allows the individual to pursue these to their advantage (Anderson and Bowman, 1976). Third, human capital theory assumes that people need education to acquire information and orient themselves towards what is possible, and that it has positive effects on new ideas and technologies that might lead to increased productivity (Schultz, 1988). Finally, increasing human capital through education could potentially promote geographical and occupational mobility., (Sandberg, 1990; While these assumptions are useful for the articulation of both the direct and indirect contribution of education to development, it is crucial to note that the human capital approach has attracted various critics.

Human capital theory, though highly influential, has not escaped severe criticism (Little, 2003; Bennell, 1996; Blaug, 1985, 1976). The sharpest critique comes from 'screening theory' (Blaug, 1985; Dore 1976; Berg, 1970), which argues that education merely creates intergenerational inequality (Williamsson, 1979), as top-level individuals from the higher social strata in the society are favoured for higher positions (Bowels and Gintis, 2002). The fact that highly educated individuals with qualifications and credentials are paid more than less educated individuals raises more questions than answers within the human capital remit (Little, 2003). In fact, Winker (1987:287) questions whether all the credentials and qualifications articulated within the human capital approach 'reflect the productivity-enhancing effects of education, or, rather represent some innate productive ability of the individual'. The second critique stems from the methods used in the rate of return analyses and biases, particularly with the sub-Saharan Africa data. Bennell (1996) raises concerns regarding the World Bank's rates of return to education published by different authors, such as Psacharopoulos (1994). Bennell (1996) was concerned about the data coverage, data quality, and general methodological considerations (sample selection, omitted variables, cross sectional earnings data, cost and benefit biases), and found the cost-benefit calculation very problematic. Bennell (1996) noted that there were some inconsistencies in Psacharopoulos' reporting, for example the exaggerated rates of returns analysis on the sub-Saharan African data. Also, in most cost-benefit analyses, the

number of years of schooling is emphasised at the expense of the quality and type of education (Blaug, 1985). Further, demand for education depends on the ability to pay for direct and indirect cost of education and the perception of the expected benefits. Thus, people are more likely to make sacrifices for education if they believe it will increase their expected economic productivity. In this sense, the human capital approach only values the instrumental value of education and devalues non-instrumental values of education such as being happy or enjoying the schooling process.

A third criticism relates to how human capital theory treats the benefits of education as merely direct economic benefits to individuals and society, while ignoring the indirect social benefits (Woodhall, 2001; Lewin 1983a). In this sense, gender, social, cultural, and non-material dimensions of education are not rated highly. Additionally, the behaviour of children who want to spend their time studying without any prospects of economic returns cannot be explained by human capital theory.

A fourth criticism concentrates on the lack of consideration of the social and political structures within which education and training take place (Ashton et al., 2005 Little and Dore, 1982; Dore 1976). If the outcome of education is obtaining 'diplomas', it can limit the overall aim of schooling (Little and Dore, 1982:3). Indeed, focusing on standardised tests and assessments as the only measure of educational outcomes fails to account for qualitative measures of the learning and teaching process (Alexander, et al., 2008). Nevertheless, the World Bank focuses on school effectiveness approaches as a quality indicator (Heneveld and Craig, 1996; Lockheed and Vespoor, 1991), which is based on a 'linear input-output model' (Tikly, 2011:8). However, there are complex and multi-directional relationships between children's background, educational processes, resource inputs, and outputs.

A fifth critique regards the strategies used to raise the quality of education under human capital theory, which typically endorses market-led solutions. As a result of this, governments in the developing countries have liberalised the education market at the expense of disadvantaged households. Hanushek and Wößmann (2008) reinforce this point by prescribing three key solutions that might address problems in the education system: improving school outcomes by creating competitions and greater choice between schools, increasing school autonomy while encouraging parental involvement, and the encouragement of league tables based on external examinations and benchmarking (Hanushek and Wößmann, 2008). The danger here, though, is the tendency for such

solutions to worsen instead of reducing inequalities in educational access, which is a basic human right (Unterhalter and Brighouse 2007).

The human capital approach has varying consequences for different groups of people due to its economic and instrumental focus (Robeyns, 2006). This means that some groups of people have better rates of return to education than others given the same quality and amount of education due to internal or external restrictions which can be natural or social in nature (Robeyns, 2006). For example, some communities value boy's education at the expense of girls since girls are not allowed to work outside the home environment. In this sense, women and girls' return to education will be naturally limited. Conceptualising education only as an economic investment compels families to choose fee-paying schools to maximise their economic chances if that is what they perceive to be better. In Lagos, Nigeria, Dixon et al. (2017) contend that the poor parents in their study were demanding to send their children to private schools. However, in his study of Mfantseman district of Ghana, Akaguri (2011a, b) convincingly argued that perception of quality as measured by examination results fuelled households' private schooling choices, although this was not supported by the evidence. Nevertheless, such perceptions might devalue the quality of government schools on one hand, and not spell out governments' deficiencies in education provision on the other. However, education has a transformative effect on every child irrespective of gender, socio-economic background, and where they live (Alkire, 2005). The difficulty is, these normative effects are not accounted for within the human capital approach which promotes neo-liberalism and exclusion (Jolly, 2003). Therefore, despite the role the human capital approach plays in education, it is severely damaging and limiting as it only recognises the instrumental importance of education. There is more to education than human capital and its economic instrumental role in education, and we must go beyond this to include other theories that promote children's rights to and in education.

3.7 The right to education

The limitations of human capital theory and its emphasis on economic growth as an object of development necessitates an alternative approach that focuses more on people who rely on complex processes to develop their capabilities (Tilak, 2002, Sen, 2014, 1997). In contrast to human capital theory, a rights-based approach emerged and dominated the policy field (UNDP, 1990). The human rights approach tends to see education as a human right that should be guaranteed to all. Tikly (2011) articulates three fundamental rights in

respect of the rights-based approach: rights to education, rights in education, and rights through education. This means the individual child or adult is at the centre of the learning process and what they bring to it, namely, their environment, content, processes, outcomes, and responsiveness to learning and community needs, as well as parental involvement (UNICEF, 2007). The rights-based framework also considers systemic indicators, such as legislation, policies, resources, administration, management, and outcomes (Barrett and Tikly, 2010).

At the policy level, children's rights to education relate to the EFA initiatives. Within the EFA framework, all human beings, especially children, are entitled to attend school for free by 2015 (UNESCO, 2014). The rights-based approach promotes the enactments of negative rights, such as protection from abuse, and encourages positive rights, which include the use of local languages in schools, fostering of learner creativity, and children's involvement in debates and democratic structures (Tikly, 2011). This means that instead of treating the classroom as a 'black box', democratic school structures are promoted in the classroom. This involves making sure every child has positive school and classroom experiences irrespective of their individual and household characteristics.

Rights-based discourses also prioritise the intrinsic value of education; whether a child gets economic or instrumental value from education does not matter for their right to education (Robeyns, 2006). This means that governments must provide quality education for their citizens irrespective of whether they will benefit from it economically. However, like human capital theory, rights-based approaches have attracted some criticisms.

A first criticism focuses on rights-based approaches' tendency to isolate learners from the social and economic disadvantages that affect learning experiences (Barrett and Tikly, 2010). Some children in developing countries are still not going to school due to their individual and household characteristics, although they have been granted rights to education (Lewin, 2007; Akyeampong et al., 2007). Some may be officially enrolled but do not attend school due to their household circumstances, and others attend but do not learn (UNESCO, 2014). However, quality education is an intrinsic right for all citizens irrespective of their socio-economic background (Unterhalter, 2003b). This raises an important question. Why are the UN agencies not effectively making sure that these rights, formulated with good intensions, are fulfilled? The fact that material resources or inputs have been provided does not necessarily guarantee that all children are learning and enjoying school. In measuring the fulfilment of these rights, governments only look

at enrolment figures – gross and net enrolment – and examination pass rates (see the *State of the Ghanaian Economy* series; ISSER, 2016). At the policy level, an analysis of other hazards should be carried out. These might include issues such as canning and other abuse which might discourage children from going to school (Unterhalter, 2003a). In some contexts, social norms, beliefs, and culture constrain women from pursuing higher education (Drèze and Sen, 2002).

Second, others allege that the policies and strategies that underpin access to education, particularly in African contexts, tend to be top-down in nature and fail to take a wider bottom-up approach that allows for a wider stakeholder involvement (Hughes, 2012; Hood, 1991). Third, critics worry that the rights-based approaches place too much emphasis on negative rights in advancing the quality of education, at the expense of positive rights and freedoms such as having one's identity reflected in the school curriculum and demanding reasonable quality education (Tikly, 2004).

A third problem with the right-based approach is its tendency to limit rights only to legal rights, thus ignoring moral aspects (Pogge and Pogge 2002). This follows in part from the fact that the rights-based perspective is exclusively government-focused (Robeyns, 2006). However, Menon (2002) argues that in some countries, governments are part of the problem, instead of part of the solution.

From the above discussion, it is clear that conceptualising education as a right is an important alternative to the human capital approach. However, like the human capital approach, the rights-based approach has its own limitations. The best approach for understanding both the instrumental and the intrinsic roles of education is an approach that combines the positive aspects of both the human capital and the rights-based approaches while being critical of their weaknesses (Sen, 2009, 1999; Robeyns, 2006). One such approach conceptualises education as human capability, which is outlined in the section that follows.

3.8 Education as capability

Sen (1999, 1992) offers an alternative approach for understanding the roles education plays. According to Sen (1999, 1992), capabilities are the different functionings that an individual can attain. In this sense, Sen sees functionings as the constitutive elements of living, which is doing and being. Some of these functionings include being educated, being healthy, being part of a nurturing family, holding onto a job, and having deep

friendships. Functionings are defined as achievements or outcomes, while capabilities are the real opportunities to achieve states of being and doing that the individual values (Sen, 1992). Therefore, the capability approach offers a space for comparison and evaluation of human development, while probing the validity of existing measures (Terzi, 2005; Pogge, and Pogge, 2002; Sen, 1992).

Sen (2007) notes that the capability approach has improved since it was first developed. For example, there have been subtle changes and greater emphasis placed on key concepts such as inequality (Sen, 1992), freedom (Sen 2014), rationality (Sen, 2002), identity (Sen, 2006), and justice (Sen, 2009). It can also be used to design and evaluate policies or for the purposes of cost-benefit analysis in different fields and in different countries (Robeyns, 2006).

Education features prominently in the capability approach, both in instrumental and intrinsic terms (Unterhalter, 2003; Drèze and Sen, 2002). Having access to education and being knowledgeable is described as a valuable capability that allows a person to flourish and expand other capabilities (Nussbaum, 2003; Alkire, 2005; Unterhalter, 2003; Sen, 1999). In relation to how education expands individuals' opportunity sets and safety, Nussbaum (2003) found in India that being literate could provide women with a choice of leaving abusive husbands to pursue what they have freedom to value. Choice for children is quite different when it comes to deciding what they have freedom to value (Saito, 2003). Also, a key role of education is to help children develop into full human beings, but schools only focus on assessing efficiency, which is easier to measure, at the expense of their personal, emotional, and intellectual development (Sen, 2002a). Sen also argued that these assessments depend on the chosen indicator of individual advantage.

The appeal of the capability approach lies in its interdisciplinary and comprehensive nature (Robyens, 2006). As discussed above, the human capital approach is economic and overly restrictive, using only instrumental goals. The rights-based approach is also restrictive by nature, as it only highlight on access to school without considering how children experience the school process. The capability approach has a wider scope which evaluates a wide range of social arrangements in all areas of capability sets. In doing so, it avoids partial evaluations. For example, if schooling fees are effectively abolished, one may think that there are no other costs to households, and that every child can therefore participate in school and can develop their capability sets. Sen (1999) argues that differences in special talent, age, and disability can differentiate the opportunity for

attaining a certain quality of life for different people even when they share the same commodity bundle. For example, two children attending the same school or living in the same locality can have completely different schooling outcomes due to their individual and household characteristics. Insofar as free compulsory education does not adequately ameliorate inequality in schooling participation, there is a case for opening the evaluative scope to cover wider schooling outcomes. In this regard, it is particularly important to address the degree to which different groups of children get access to school, experience school, and hope that they will have freedom to achieve what they have freedom to value.

Sen (1992) discusses the notion of 'adaptive preferences', which he describes as the way in which aspirations interact with social, psychological, and environmental constraints on individuals. In this sense, preferences are contingent on variable limitations, and therefore aspirations might not reflect the actual preferences an individual opted for (Bridges, 2006). Regarding an individual's adaptive preferences, Sen (1992:55) explains:

> a thoroughly deprived person, leading a very reduced life, might not appear to be badly off in terms of the mental metric of desire and its fulfilment, if the hardship is accepted with non-grumbling resignation. In situations of longstanding deprivation, the victims do not go on grieving and lamenting all the time, and very often make great efforts to pleasure in small mercies and to cut down personal desires to modest—'realistic'—proportions.

Sen's explanation brings us to a realm in which people change their individual preferences in order to make it easier to accept the status quo which education policies have prescribed for them. Relating adapted preferences to disability and gender, Nussbaum (2009, 2005a) stresses the way individuals adapt their preferences because their world is reduced to just a narrow sphere. However, the capability analysis attempts to take all sources of inequalities in people's opportunity sets into account to find meaningful effects. The next section provides a brief discussion on the key differences between the three theories discussed (see Hart, 2012; and Robeyns, 2006 for detail discussions).

3.9 Differences between the three perspectives of education

There are fundamental differences between the three approaches discussed. Firstly, the most significant difference between these three approaches has to do with the roles they play in education. As discussed above, human capital theory only focuses on the instrumental economic roles of education in the different processes of economic development, whereas the rights-based approach mainly stresses the intrinsic personal

role of education. However, the capability model recognises both intrinsic and instrumental roles of education.

Secondly, the roots and natures of the three models differ. Human capital theory takes its roots from neoclassical microeconomics as its point of departure and focuses on the costs and benefits of education. In contrast to the human capital approach, the human rights model is interested in the realisation of fundamental human rights to education. Both the human capital and rights-based models have become very influential and popular globally (Tikly, 2011). For example, the human rights model has been adopted by UNICEF, while human capital theory greatly features in the World Bank's policies (Szirmai, 1997). On the other hand, the capability model is underspecified and lacks a degree of operationalisation but considers contextual evaluation of specific social arrangements as well as people's well-being and freedom (Robeyns, 2006).

Thirdly, human capital theory, with its cost-benefit analysis, only considers the number of years of education but not the quality or type of education and sees education as a consumable good instead of an intrinsically interesting endeavour (Szirmai, 1997). Therefore, the demand for quality education does not only depend on costs and benefits, but also on the ability to pay for the education provided. From the human rights perspective, every individual is entitled to the same rights and once these rights are granted, it is difficult to claim further rights. Conversely, the capability model is comprehensive, complex, and wide in scope. However, education as a capability fully underestimates the complex nature of schooling (Unterhalter, 2003a). For this reason, Sen (1992) argues that capability must be context specific.

At the heart of Ghana's education policies is the belief that education and learning will raise economic aspirations, set values, and ultimately eradicate poverty. As such, the government heavily invests in access to education in order to realise every child's right to fulfil their future aspirations. As discussed in chapter two, despite this investment in government schools, there has been a growing demand for low-fee private schools in deprived areas. The argument behind this is that private schools offer superior education, at least when examination results are compared, and a perception of better 'human capital' route to increased incomes. However, a framework of school processes is missing in these analyses. The next section presents the conceptual framework that seeks to add school process variables to the low-fee private school debate.

3.10 Conceptual Framework

Inclusive and quality access to education is central to the SDGs and lies at the heart of human capability and development. Therefore, a lack of access to inclusive and quality education is both a part of the definition of injustice and a means of reducing human capabilities (CREATE, 2011). The achievement of SDG4 is essential to achieving prosperity, peace, reduction of inter-generational cycles of poverty, empowerment of women, skills and attitude development, and other desirable goals that transform the developmental prospects of nations and individuals. Accordingly, the fulfilment of these socially optimal ideals lies in the provision of free and compulsory government education. Nevertheless, some argue that government schools are of poor quality relative to their private counterparts (Tooley et al., 2007). These claims must be further investigated, given the limited scope of the school quality variables and analysis.

The Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS) and Ghana Education Management Information System (EMIS) collect and use data to provide information about the education system's achievements, progress, and gaps. The data will also be useful for meeting future needs in education with regard to the fulfilment of access, participation in education, and the improvement of teaching and learning. However, analysis based on this data tends to focus on easily measurable goals such as achievement defined by examination results and enrolment rates.

In this study, I have generated a vision of social justice through education and a wider range of indicators. The right of access to education must include judgements of whether every child has access to a free education provided by the state but chooses to access a fee-paying private school because of the value they place on private schools (freedom to choose), schooling experiences (what skills, attitudes, competencies, and capabilities are acquired), and how these help to transform children's lives (aspirations). This vision of education (see Figure 3.1) is interpreted in relation to inner-city communities, which are populated predominantly by rural-urban migrants (Awumbila et al., 2014). It determines starting points for important contributions to the government-private discourse, with the integration of context-specific social justice approaches. It also helps to identify the nature of school processes, excluded groups, and potential improvements to the education system.

Figure 3.1 Vision of social justice through education

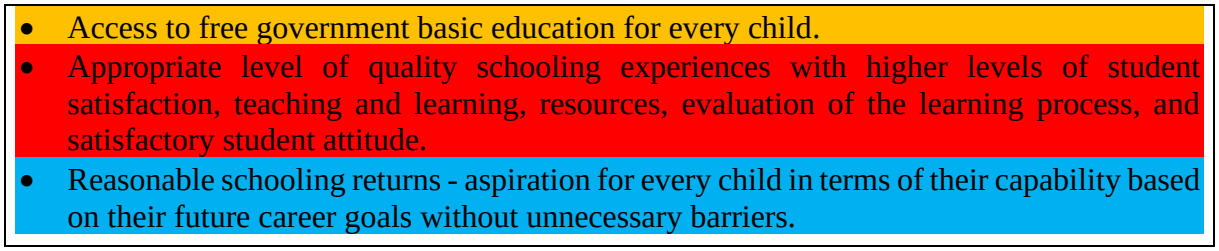
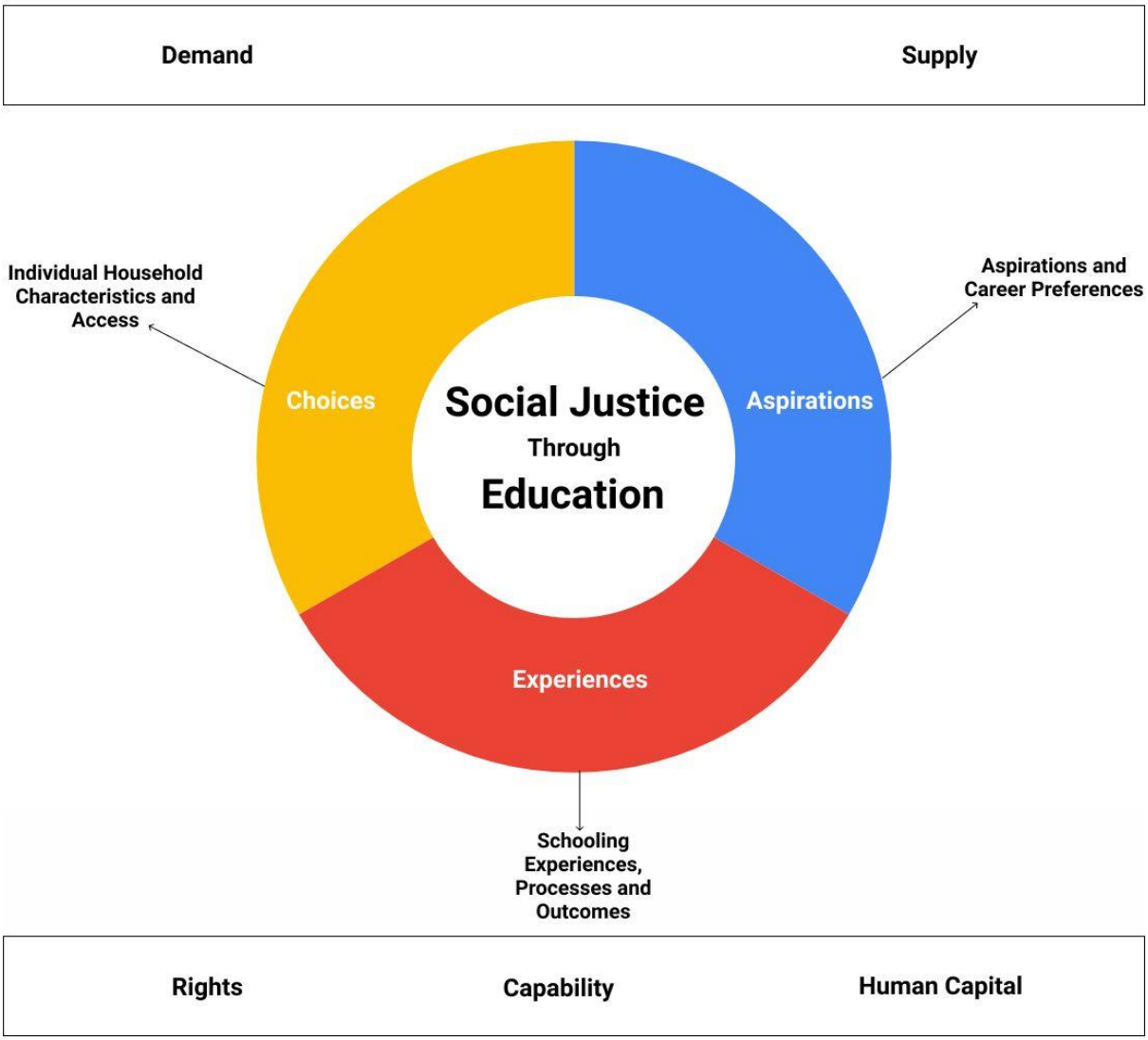


Figure 3.1 shows three necessary conditions at the heart of social justice through education. They include free government school place for every school going child, good student experiences that will help them achieve their schooling aspirations irrespective of their individual and household background and whether they have natural aptitude for academic subjects.

Conceptually, injustice through education has a range of causes that lie at different levels of analysis. These can be diagrammatically mapped to include students' individual and household characteristics, community-level skills, practices, resources, and knowledge attributes, as articulated in the Ghana school mapping manual (MoE, 2001). Education's purpose also includes the livelihood and career aspirations of learners (Rolleston, 2009). These interact to form meaningful access to education, the achievement of which, it is believed, will realise education as a right for all. What follows is the visual model of the concept.

Figure 3.2 Conceptualising injustice: Model of social justice through education



However, educational access might be problematic on the demand and supply side in deprived communities, owing to governments' heightened promises of "free" education on one hand and the limited supply of quality schools by governments on the other (Lewin, 2011). Where government schools are very unevenly provided, equitable access to education might be compromised. For example, the poorest children may have less of a chance than their richest peers of accessing and completing the education cycle. Access problems might also arise from failing demand amongst over-aged children who might be affected by the opportunity costs of school attendance, and in communities where the

quality of the schooling experiences might be low (CREATE, 2011; Lewin, 2011). For education to have utility and value, access must lead to transformations in capability that are associated with attitudes, skills, and knowledge that can enhance the life chances of learners (Hart, 2012). The next section concludes the chapter by summarising the factors discussed.

3.11 Summary and conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the literature on factors that contribute to access to and demand for schooling. It also examines the main factors that explain private school choice. While the relative dysfunctionality of the government sector in many developing countries, including Ghana, has been widely accepted as a reason for the growth of low-fee private schools, the issue of whether low-fee private schooling is superior in terms of delivering good educational outcomes to disadvantaged children has not been addressed in the literature. This has to do with the range of variables generally considered in such studies. A case for private school superiority is made on several grounds. The evidence tends to compare achievements, inputs, and perception, leaving out key variables, such as schooling experiences and aspirations, which might speak to social justice ideals. Thus, studies examining the relative differences between low-fee private schools and their government counterparts focused largely on either rights-based or human capital discourses, while excluding more context-specific social justice approaches. In this sense, the arguments of such research appear to be based on limited data and variables, as well as on restricted theory. Therefore, this chapter has set out a framework – social justice – which combines three analytical perspectives to analyse the government and private schools in the inner-city of Accra. It also aims to determine whether students in private schools have better experiences than those in government schools based on unobserved variables. Parents' and students' schooling aspirations, defined as students' future career goals, are examined. For social justice to be realised, children must be able to attend a type of school they value without any constraints and have good schooling experiences which provide them with both the instrumental and intrinsic values of education.

The next chapter focuses on the methodology and methods for the study. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 will apply the framework to the results of the study. In chapter eight, I will consider whether the application of the framework leads to a successful interpretation of the data to understand how this study has contributed to existing knowledge.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods

4.1 Introduction

The phenomenon of low-fee private schools emerging in the developing world appears to have gained considerable debate and research interest, as demonstrated by the literature review (see chapter three). Most research focusing on school choice or comparing government and private schooling has used either quantitative or qualitative research methods or a mixture of both.

Following Akyeampong and Rolleston (2013), this study adopts a mixed methods approach (Archibald et al., 2015; Greenwood and Terry, 2012; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Morgan, 2007; Mertens, 2007; Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007; Ivankova et al., 2006; Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2006; Ivankova and Stick, 2003; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003), through which it seeks to meet three objectives. Firstly, it investigates whether there is any relationship between children's individual and household characteristics and their access to government or private schools. Secondly, it explores whether any differences exist between government schools and low-fee private schools (LFPSs) in terms of their respective students' experiences. Finally, it explores the aspirations of inner-city children at government schools and LFPSs.

The chapter focuses on the methodology and methods used to shed light on these complex phenomena. Specifically, it discusses the research approach and design, sampling and data sources, and research instruments used, and reflects on ethical considerations, my position as a researcher, and how it might affect the research. Finally, a summary of the chapter is provided.

4.2 Mixed methods research

Mixed methods research (MMR) is defined as a procedure which collects, analyses, and mixes or integrates quantitative and qualitative data within a single study at a given stage of the research process to provide a better understanding of a research problem (Creswell, 2012; Greenwood and Terry, 2012; 2007; Mertens, 2007; Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Bryman, 2007; Ivankova et al., 2006; Ivankova and Stick, 2003; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003; Morgan, 2007; Creswell and Tashakkori, 2008; Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2006). Combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study allows for a holistic analysis of a phenomenon while the two methods complement each other (Green et al., 1989). MMR draws on the collective strengths of

qualitative and quantitative research while minimizing their weaknesses (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) stress the importance of MMR in the field of education, asserting that it provides epistemological and methodological nuances which allow for more effective research. However, Caruth (2013) highlights the complexity involved in conducting MMR. To limit these complexities, Collins et al. (2006) offer a 13-step guide to the conceptualisation of MMR, which can take the form of any of the five types presented below.

4.2.1 Typologies of MMR design

There are generally considered to be five MMR approaches that can be employed to inform education research (see Creswell, 2012, 2015; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Caruth, 2013), although the purpose and aims of each study will guide the choice of typology. The five MMR approaches are as follows:

1. *Convergent parallel*: Simultaneously collects and merges both quantitative and qualitative data.
2. *Explanatory sequential*: Quantitative data is gathered first, followed by qualitative data to supplement quantitative findings.
3. *Sequential Exploratory*: Qualitative data is collected first followed by quantitative data to give meaning to qualitative findings.
4. *Transformative*: Explanatory, exploratory, or convergent designs are employed within an evolving context.
5. *Multi-phased*: An issue or subject is examined by means of several studies (Caruth, 2013; Ivankova et al., 2006).

This study employed the explanatory sequential approach, which is considered the most straightforward of the mixed methods designs (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). With this approach, the primary emphasis is on the quantitative aspect, which is conducted first, followed by the gathering of qualitative data. At the intermediate (results) and final (discussion) stages of the present study, the two sets of data were integrated. The quantitative data analysis provided a basic understanding of what determines government and private school choice. Once children are registered in government or private schools, the quantitative method explores the differential experiences between the school types. Given that private schools are perceived to be superior to government schools, a simple

logit regression was used to test this hypothesis. The qualitative analysis explained, refined, and gave meaning to the statistical results.

The rationale behind the use of the explanatory design lies in its various advantages. Firstly, it is easy to implement due to the two-phased structure and collection of one data type at a time (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). Secondly, it provides a bridge between survey results and interviews, making it logical and intuitive (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2006). Finally, it promotes clear and accurate presentation of results, as the final report utilises data derived from both methods (Ivankova et al., 2007).

However, there are specific challenges associated with the explanatory design and I considered these in planning the research. For example, I was mindful that this method takes time to implement (Ivankova et al., 2007). Therefore, I devoted enough time, especially for the collection and processing of qualitative data with its lengthy implementation and interview transcription and editing stages. See Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) for an extensive discussion of the various forms of this design. However, questions related to research design are important to issues related to the researcher's philosophical stance. This study adopts the pragmatic approach, and the next section takes up this topic.

4.3 The pragmatic approach to methodology

Researchers need to know and articulate the philosophical assumptions that guide their own realities and the methods of forming and analysing them (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). Accordingly, this study adopts a pragmatic stance which combines two traditional research paradigms, namely, positivism/post-positivism and interpretivism/constructivism, as a foundation to inform the research as well as to lend legitimacy to its inquiry while maintaining robustness in its analysis (Morgan, 2007). The positivist/post-positivist paradigm is mainly associated with quantitative research methods (Creswell, 2003; Guba and Lincoln, 2005), and makes claims to knowledge based on cause and effect. It focuses on selected variables and their measurement, and the testing of theories that are continually refined (Creswell, 2003; Paul, 2005). Conversely, the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm typically lends itself to qualitative approaches in order to understand and give meaning to phenomena based on participants and their subjective views (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) refer to a qualitative inquiry as one shaped from the bottom up, meaning that the inquiry starts

from individuals' perspectives on broad themes and patterns which lead to the formulation or modification of a hypothesis (Mertens, 2010).

In this regard, the pragmatic paradigm and system of philosophy is based on a bridge between the positivist/post-positivist and interpretivist/constructivist paradigms. With this approach, research questions drive the method used and the focus is on the consequences of research rather than the method (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2006).

Most importantly, this paradigm utilises both quantitative and qualitative data to examine the problem under study (Newman et al., 1998; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2006). It is pluralistic in nature and designed for what works in practice (Creswell, 2003; Hammersley, 2001; Lincoln and Guba, 2000).

All the above paradigms, namely positivism and constructivism, rely on different notions of the nature of reality (ontology), and how we gain knowledge of what we know (epistemology) (Creswell, 2003; Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Mertens (2012) was right when he commented on the ability of the pragmatic paradigm to offer an in-depth understanding due to the dissonance and convergence found in its approach. Mertens (2012:256) observes that the pragmatic paradigm 'allows the researcher to adhere to the post-positivist paradigm in conducting quantitative-oriented data collection, and the constructivist in qualitative-oriented data collection and then combine the two in a conversation with each other throughout the study'.

Following Mertens's (2012) advice, I developed a survey the aim of which was to gather data on school children and education in the study area in terms of individual and household characteristics, and how they perceived their experiences and aspirations. Additionally, it sought to identify the possible links between a child's characteristics and enrolment in a particular type of school, which I considered fundamental to understanding school choice in the inner-city community. Therefore, I adopted a positivist approach to the gaining of knowledge about these processes (Bassey, 1995). Ontologically, a positivist's reality appears singular in nature rather than multiple, and objective rather than subjective. The positivist's epistemology is grounded in impartiality due to its detachment from the knower (Bassey, 1995; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007).

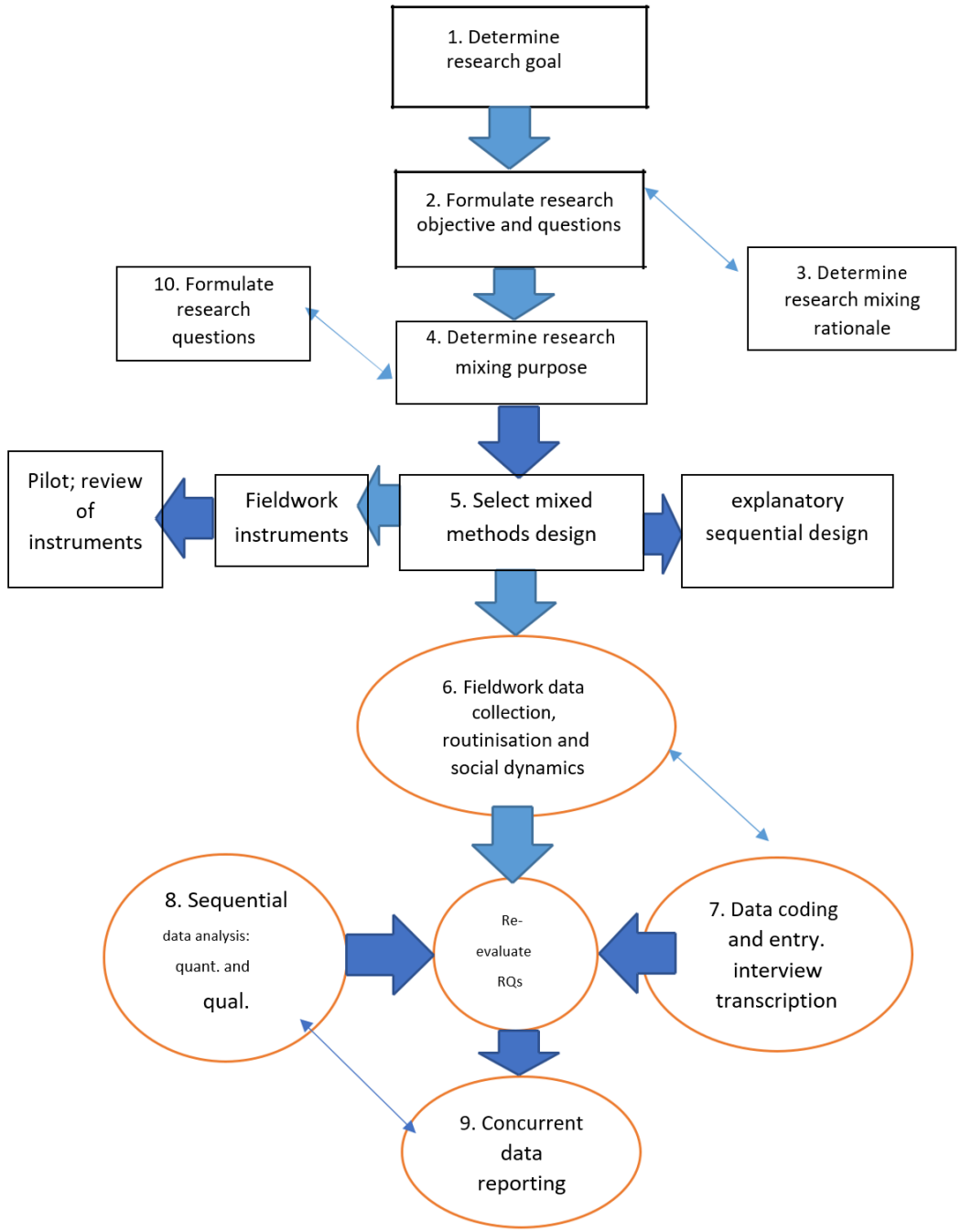
Conversely, the interpretive/qualitative aspect of the research was 'evolving and non-directional' and allowed me to gain deeper insight based on participants' own constructions of knowledge (Creswell, 1998:99). Thus, the findings from the interviews

were supported with quotations to illustrate the different perspectives of the interviewees (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Tuli, 2010). Awareness of both ontology and epistemology was very useful as it guided data collection based on what worked at the time to develop better underpinnings for descriptions of data while addressing my research questions. Ontologically, I acknowledge that there is a single real world. For example, researchers provide multiple perspectives by testing hypotheses (Creswell, 2007). Epistemologically, I assume that individuals have their own constructions and interpretations of their world. However, these interpretations could form joint understandings of social life. Therefore, these joint understandings can form causal explanations/associations of social phenomena, categorised into many different ways to achieve a degree of mutual understanding between participants, researchers, and the research community (Morgan, 2007).

4.4 Research design: Mixed methods model

A research design is a procedure for collecting, analysing, interpreting and presenting data (Creswell, 2007). This section describes the research design used for the present study.

Figure 4.1 The MMR explanatory sequential design



Source: Adapted from Ivankova et al. (2006).

Table 4.1 The Research Process

Phases	**Procedure**	**Output**	**Participants'**
Phase 1 Quantitative data collection	Paper-based survey (754 participants)	Numeric data	• Teachers from 8 schools: 111 cases. • Students in year 6 and JHS3 from 8 schools=754.
Phase 2 Initial quantitative data analysis	Data coding Data entry Data cleaning Data screening (Univariate, multivariate)	Descriptive statistics Differences in means Logistic regression OLS	
Phase 3 Qualitative data collection	21 adult participants purposely identified and interviewed Observations	Interview transcripts Notes Observation protocol Audio interview data	• Head Teachers: 8 • Circuit Supervisor: 1 • Assemblyman: 1 • Parents: 11
Phase 4 Initial qualitative data analysis and data summary	Thematic analysis (within and across cases). Colour-coding	Interview transcripts Observations	
Phase 5 Integration of quantitative and qualitative data concurrently	**Presentation of results:** • Quantitative results • Explanation of quantitative results using qualitative data	**Thesis report:** • Discussions of findings. • Contribution to knowledge of government and LFPS research	Report summary to participants: Workshop: • Head Teachers • Teachers • Assemblyman

		• Recommendations for future research	• Circuit Supervisor • Students Focus group: for parents.

Source: The author, adapted from Ivankova et al. (2006).

Figure 4.1 is a diagrammatic representation of the research process based on Ivankova et al.'s (2006) MMR model, which indicates the phases, procedures, and products involved in the study. Ivankova et al. (2006) developed the first three columns of the MMR model shown in Table 4.1. Muvunyi (2016) developed this model further by adding a fourth column to describe the sample. This study added a component to phase five to describe how the summary of the overall report may be utilised.

The quantitative data was collected using the Ghana Education Service's (GES) School Mapping Training Manual (MOE/GES, 2001) as a guide in developing my survey instrument. The manual was collaboratively prepared by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF to inform large scale educational reforms in Ghana. Three sets of questionnaires were respectively administered to head teachers, teachers, and students in both government schools and LFPSs in the inner-city environment to understand the correlation between school choice and child and household characteristics. The experiences and aspirations of students from each school type were also compared. This approach offered the opportunity to explore multiple dimensions of household school choice. The qualitative phase was informed by interviews with 21 individuals, including parents, head teachers, an assemblyman, and a GES Circuit Supervisor. The overall analysis was largely based on data gathered from the survey instrument and interviews, and to a lesser extent on observation.

4.5 Scoping

To understand the dynamics of the community under study, a scoping exercise was conducted. This involved walking through the study area with two informants for two days. The aim of this exercise was to survey the slum for schools – both government and private – I could study. There was also a need to ascertain the safety and suitability of the sites for conducting research. Additionally, I visited the District Assembly Office to obtain an overview of programmes geared towards the development of the community.

This exercise provided valuable insights. First, I discovered that there are government and private schools I could study. Second, I found that the study area was a safe place to study in. Finally, the scoping exercise connected me with many school officials who helped me to gain access to schools in the community.

4.6 Data sources

4.6.1 Quantitative data instrument and analysis

The survey instrument that I purposively developed for the study is based on the extended version of the Ghana School Mapping Manual (MoE 2001). The survey instrument includes most of the key constructs and factors in the school mapping model, but I added an aspirations domain (see Table 4.2). The survey was administered to Class 6 and JHS 3 students (students in transition) and Class 6 and JHS 3 teachers in government and private schools. It consists of individual, household, and school items that facilitate or hinder students' schooling choice, experiences, and aspirations while describing how they vary across government and private schools.

The survey addressed themes related to school practices at the institutional level: overall schooling satisfaction; teaching and learning process; level of technology; evaluation of the learning process; students' attitude; and classroom climate. In addition to these, students also supplied individual and household background information and their schooling and future career aspirations. The domains, variables, and descriptions of the variables used are described in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Description of variables and variable coding

Outcome	Type of variable	Description
1. Child's individual characteristics		
Age	Continuous	Child's age
Sex	Dummy	0=female; 1=male
Religion	Dummy	Islam=1; Christian=0
Class	Dummy	P6=0; JHS=I
2. Child's household characteristics		
Parents' educational level	Continuous	Highest grade reached: 0=no education 1=primary

		2=JHS/middle 3=SHS 4=higher education
Radio/TV ownership	Dummy	0=no; 1=yes
Having siblings	Dummy	0=no; 1=yes
After-school classes	Dummy	0=no; 1=yes
Work after school	Dummy	0=no; 1=yes
Pay for extra classes	Dummy	0=no; 1=yes
3. Schooling experiences		
a. Student satisfaction (5 items) b. Teaching and learning process (5 items) c. Level of technology (5 items) d. Evaluating learning (4 items) e. Classroom experience (8 items) f. Students' attitude (5 items)	Dummy	6-point scale (0 to 5), defined as follows: 1&2=1, 2&3=2, 4&5=3. Recoded as: 1=never; 2=sometimes; 3=always
4. Aspirations		
Future occupation	Dummy	Nine categories (doctor; lawyer; other professions; police; soldier; nurse; trader; farmer; other). These were later recoded into two categories: 1=professional; 0=non-professional.
Reason for/benefits of occupation	Dummy	Earn income; support family/community; gain respect (five categories)
What will prevent you from achieving this occupational goal (barriers).	Dummy	Poverty; peer pressure; lack of support, lack of opportunity.

4.6.2 Sample

The study's target group were government and private school children who were transitioning from primary 6 to JHS1 and from JHS3 to SHS1. Approximately 780 students were sampled (see Table 4.3 for the disaggregation of the survey participants)

across government and private schools, with the use of a stratified sampling strategy with two levels or strata: public/private; individual and household characteristics, schooling experiences, and aspirations fields.

I conducted a pilot study with 20 government and private school teachers and 50 students with similar characteristics as the study group before fielding the instrument. Based on the findings from the pilot, I reviewed and revised the survey questions. For example, I revised 'what are the educational level of your parents?' to 'which is the highest level of education achieved by your father/mother?' The final instrument consisted of 60 survey questionnaire items.

There were 20 schools in and around the community. I sent a request to all the head teachers, asking them if their schools would participate in the study. Among the 20 schools, 13 schools (4 government and 9 private) agreed to take part in the study representing 76% of the schools in the area. Out of the 13 schools that agreed to take part in the study, 5 were dropped due to limited information. In the end, I ended up with data from 4 government and 4 private schools for a full analysis of students (analysis does not include teachers' responses). These 8 schools comprised 47% of the cluster of schools in and around the study community (see chapter two for details of schools).

I visited each of the 8 schools in September 2015 and distributed the questionnaires to students in person in class on the days I visited. The questionnaire consisted of items regarding personal characteristics (age, gender, class, religion, and type of school) and household background (parental education, number of siblings, family size, ownership of radio or TV, after-school work, extra classes, parent-child interaction). In addition to these, each child answered questions on the six thematic constructs on school experiences, including students' overall schooling satisfaction, teaching and learning process, level of technology use, evaluating the learning process, classroom experiences, and students' attitude. In addition, questions on students' schooling aspirations (future career choice, why they chose that career, strategy for achieving their chosen career goal, barriers that might prevent them from achieving goals, and benefits of chosen future career) were asked.

The teacher questionnaire (see Appendix 2) had two components: the first collected school administrative data (completed by head teachers only - presented in chapter two), while the second addressed aspects of schooling experiences (completed by all teachers).

The first section, which collected administrative data, was designed to provide contextual data on both school management types. The second section focused on five factors – 1) quality of teaching and learning, 2) level of technology, 3) evaluation of the student learning process, 4) classroom environment, and 5) school environment. The teacher aspects of the survey (see Appendix 2) are not included in this research.

The students' questionnaires were administered and completed in class by Class 6 and JHS3 students and collected immediately after completion in order to maximise the response rate. A total of 754 students handed in their completed survey questionnaires, for a response rate of 97%. Consistent with the mapping manual instrument, the questionnaire had 6 categories which allowed the students to give close and open-ended answers rather than yes or no answers.

In the analysis, 4 government and 4 private schools in an inner-city community were compared in order to determine schooling choice, experiences, and aspirations. I did not invite schools that fell outside of the inner-city environment, and as such, all 8 schools in this study were members of the inner-city community. Table 4.3 presents the survey participants' details.

Table 4.3 Survey participants by gender, grade, and school type

			Grade		
Gender			**Prim. 6**	**JHS 3**	**Total**
Male	School	Gov.	107	90	198
	type	Private	56	61	117
			163	**151**	**315**
Female	School	Gov.	140	143	283
	type	Private	85	69	154
			225	**212**	**437**
Total	School	Gov.	248	233	482

type	Private	141	130	271
Total		**389**	**363**	**754**

Table 4.3 shows details of the survey participants by grade, gender, and type of school. The survey questionnaires were administered to a sample of 482 government and 271 private school primary 6 and JHS 3 children. Of the sampled students in the four government schools, 248 were primary 6 students, while the remaining 233 were JHS 3 students. Among these, 198 were male and 283 were female. The privateschool sample comprised 141 primary 6 and 130 JHS 3 students, of whom 117 were male and 154 female.

In the first analysis (chapter five), students' type of school (whether a child attended government or private school) was the dependent variable. Three key groups of independent variables of interest are described in Table 4.2. The first group of variables include the children's individual and household characteristics, which research has shown to be strongly associated with schooling access (Akyeampong and Rolleston, 2013). They include variables such as: gender, age, class, religion, parental education, number of siblings, household asset ownership, whether a child works after school, whether a child receives extra classes, and parent-child interaction. All the students' individual and household characteristics were dummy coded.

The second set of independent variables measured schooling experiences: students' satisfaction (5 questions), teaching and learning (5 questions), level of technology (5 questions), evaluation of the learning process (4 questions), classroom environment (8 questions), and students' attitude (5 questions) see Table 4.2 above and Appendix 1 for full details. Six individual scales were constructed from these 6 groups of variables. I later collapsed the scales into three categories as follows: scales 0 to 1=1; 2 to 3=2; and 4 to 5=3. These three categories were later recoded as follows: 1=None (Never); 2=average (sometimes); 3=always (very often).

One challenge with the schooling experiences constructs was the relatively large number of variables to consider; some of the variables might have highly correlated with each other. Therefore, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) methods were applied to each group of variables to form six sets of combined indices. I retained only the first components of each of the principal component analyses, as they had the highest vector

explaining the relevance of the included schooling experiences variables. The Eigenvalue of the first components ranged from 40% to 76%. The R-squared values ranged from 11% to 21%, indicating a good model fit.

The 5 questions that formed 'schooling satisfaction' were combined into an index which is referred to as the 'schooling satisfaction' index. The same method was applied to the other schooling experiences variables. Table 4.4 summarises the six schooling experiences indexes.

Table 4.4 Summary statistics of PCAs of schooling experiences variables

Variable	Observation	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Satisfaction	743	0.168	1.259	-7.543	.8175
Teaching and learning process	731	0.374	1.319	-3.734	1.943
Technology	736	-0.094	1.145	-2.739	2.646
Teaching evaluation	749	0.144	1.212	-6.784	1.226
Pupil's attitude	739	-0.154	0.9793	-3.821	4.013
Classroom experience	718	-0.409	1.356	-5.691	1.531

Table 4.4 presents a summary of the PCAs across the different teaching and learning characteristics. The observations were not consistent across all groups due to some missing data in some categories.

A final analysis focused on variables which represented students' schooling aspirations, constructed as their future career occupation, the benefits of their chosen future career, and the barriers they anticipated to achieving their chosen future career. I performed a stepwise analysis where I entered each of the predictor variables in sequence and assessed their values, retaining all the variables that contributed to the models. Therefore, the

stepwise method ensured that the smallest possible set of predictor variables was included in the models.

I employed a three-stage strategy to answer the study's three research questions. First, I used descriptive analysis to explore the distribution of individual and household characteristics by school type, obtaining the mean difference scores between government and private school students. I compared government and private schools for statistical significance. This was to ensure that the differences were larger than expected due to sample variation. The statistical significance difference was at the 0.05 level, indicating that the probability that the difference between government and private schools was due to chance was less than 1 in 20.

In the second stage of the analysis, a logistic estimation model analysis method was applied to each group of variables to determine the probability of being in a government school, after controlling for other variables. The dependent variable was 'school type', indicating whether a student attended public or private school. The statistically significant effects could not be solely attributed to a school type effect as it might have been possible that private school students, for example, came from relatively more affluent households. They might also have had more educated parents who were more likely to have good professional jobs. Therefore, the final stage of the analysis went deeper to detect these issues.

In the final stage of the analysis, Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression was used to explore the association between students' schooling experiences and aspiration variables, and how individual and household characteristics and school type mediated these associations. First, in the school experiences analysis, I specified random effects regression models for each type of school studied. The fixed effect models accounted for the unobserved differences between school types, as well as maintaining an assumption that children in different school management types were equally responsive to changes in the covariates. Students in private schools may have experienced better schooling experiences and been more aspirational, on average, than government school children. If private school children did not derive superior schooling experiences and higher aspirations, this might not have been possible to detect with the fixed effect models.

Therefore, in the OLS regression analysis for schooling experiences, six models were separately specified for each school type, and a pooled sample of government and private

schools was created. OLS estimates were obtained with and without school type dummy (non-pooled and pooled, respectively) with background characteristics, for example age, gender, etc. The coefficients of the pooled sample were compared with the non-pooled models to determine if schooling experience was determined by school management type or otherwise. The same method was applied to the schooling aspiration variables.

Initially, access, experiences, and aspiration dummy variables (1 if yes and 0 otherwise) were fitted on a pooled logistic sample (government and private school students) and OLS estimates were obtained with and without the school type dummy. The analysis examined whether the coefficients of the pooled and non-pooled sample varied when individual and household characteristics were simultaneously entered to determine the effects of both measures on aspirations.

4.6.3 Limitations of the quantitative data interpretation

The first challenge posed by the data and its analysis was the huge number of the variables considered. It was likely that many of the individual and household characteristics were highly correlated with each other, resulting in uninterpretable results. Also, the dummy variables might have been endogenous. For example, differences in aspiration may have reflected differences in the observed background characteristics as well as non-random selection into government or private schools. Therefore, the results might have generated biased parameter approximations of some of the variables considered. One cannot provide a causal interpretation of such estimated parameters. There was also the issue of selection bias which typically related to how I selected students in transition and in one inner-city community of Accra. However, this dataset was unique in providing rich estimations and important associations of access to education. As pointed out earlier, the survey instrument had measures for several variables that reduced some of the biases mentioned. For example, the study was better able to capture a large range of individual and household factors which were important for valid inferences about students' schooling access, experiences, and aspirations in government and private schools.

4.7 Qualitative data collection and analysis

4.7.1 Interview participants

Twenty-one individuals were interviewed, including eight head teachers, 10 parents, one circuit supervisor, and one assemblyman. Four head teachers were selected from each school type. Parents were initially contacted at a mosquito awareness event at which I

explained the purpose of the study before asking for volunteers who had children in either government or private school, or both. Of 40 volunteers, 11 were randomly selected. The circuit supervisor oversaw the supervision of all schools – both government and private – in each area and reported to the Inspectorate Division of the Ministry of Education (MoE). The assemblyman was a local politician who contributed to education policy.

Having collected the volunteers' contact details, I called those selected and arranged their interviews.

I had also initially planned to interview students in their own homes but decided against this after conducting pilot interviews during which parents, mostly fathers, dominated, leaving their children to observe. In cases in which both parents were present, fathers still dominated the interviews. If the interviews had been strictly one-to-one, with any 'chaperons' remaining silent, this obstacle could presumably have been overcome. However, this might have disturbed household dynamics.

Table 4.5 Participants interviewed

Participants	Government	Private	Male	Female	Frequency
Head teachers	4	4	7	1	8
Parents	5	6	7	3	11
Circuit supervisor	1			1	1
Assemblyman			1		1
Total					**21**

4.7.2 Interviews

One-to-one interviews were extremely helpful as they allowed me to note participants' responses, as well as their body language and expressions while asking follow-up questions. They also helped lend a more personable feel to the interview process (Butin, 2010). However, I was aware that these same qualities could inhibit participants from talking about their experiences, intuitions, and feelings about education access, experiences, and aspirations. My main aim was to determine how to elicit a narrative. To this end, I gave subtle cues and prompts such as 'tell me more', 'tell me about…', and

'what did you mean when you said…' I thus encouraged them to talk and showed that I was interested in what they were telling me.

The interviews were conducted using the following tools: an interview guide, an interview/observation protocol, a voice recorder, and field notes.

4.7.3 Interview guide

The same interview guide (see appendix 3) was used for the head teachers, circuit supervisor, assemblyman, and parents, but in a way that allowed for adaptability. It thus indicated the order and sequence of specific questions while ensuring a consistent range of information from all participant groups. It also served as a checklist to ensure that all relevant topics were covered. I adapted both the wording and sequence of questions to specific participants, while remaining free to build conversations around education access. In this way, the guide helped me focus on predetermined topics but also allowed me to word questions spontaneously, enabling individual experiences and perspectives to emerge.

I used a carefully formulated semi-structured interview protocol to gather the necessary data and avoid response bias (Butin, 2010). The latter is where interviewees modify their answers to represent what they think researchers want to hear by saying what is socially acceptable. Conversely, the protocol helped me ask open-ended questions that elicited deep and meaningful responses based on participants' narratives. The interview protocol had three columns. The first column focused on predetermined and standardised questions with the opportunity for more open-ended follow-up questions and clarification as necessary. These questions were directly linked to my research questions. The second column contained space for general notes on interviews and interviewees' mannerisms. The third column allowed for notes on what I observed at the interview venue.

4.7.4 Voice recorder

To fully capture interview interactions, I recorded all but two conversations. I initially used a voice recorder, but after two interviews I realised it was too obtrusive and inhibited participants' responses. Therefore, I used my phone instead, which helped the interviews run more efficiently because the participants found the phone less intimidating. Using this judiciously allowed me time to observe the participant's non-verbal communication, look around for clues, and note other salient points (Patton, 2015). I only recorded interviews after having first explained my objectives and rationale for doing so, stressing that the

recording was purely for the purposes of the study I had already explained to them. I reassured participants that recordings adhered to the principles of the informed consent form they had been given. All interviewees consented to being recorded.

4.7.5 Field notes

Throughout the duration of the fieldwork, I kept notes on everything I believed pertinent to the study, which I later wrote up in full. This record included details of people I encountered, the physical setting, and other descriptive information that might facilitate understanding of the context and activities I observed (Patton, 1987). These notes also helped give meaning to some of the participants' responses. The following section addresses the entire research journey from the planning stage to the end.

4.7.6 Classroom observation

Four government and four private schools were selected for observation. In each school, classes 1, 3, 6, and JHS3 were observed. The teaching timetable was employed to see what subjects were taught in the classes and how teachers in government and private schools managed their classes (see appendix 4 for the observation protocol). The observation was also informed by Westbrook et al.'s (2014) critical review which points out aspects that illustrate competencies, including professional values and attitudes, professional knowledge, and professional practice (see Appendix 4 for expanded details). In each school, three observations each were carried out in classes 1, 3, 6, and JHS3. In class 1 classrooms, phonics and Ghanaian language lessons were observed. In the other classes, a variety of lessons were observed, including drawing, reading, comprehension, maths, social studies, and science. This enabled me to see how teachers' professional values, attitudes, knowledge, and practice played out in the classroom, and how they impacted on children's experiences.

4.7.7 Qualitative data analysis

Appointments were set with the eight head teachers I had purposively selected for interview and all appointments proceeded as arranged. I only wished to interview 10 parents but 200 signed up. I randomly selected 30 and collected their names and phone numbers. However, I quickly learned that although respondents knew and were used to

interacting with each other, they were reluctant to share their views in a group. For this reason, I randomly selected 11 parents by drawing their names from a jar.

I transcribed all the interviews in writing, using the Google Docs application. I first played the voice recording of each respondent and then repeated it. The application picked up the words from my spoken repetition of it and transcribed them to the visual display, making it easier to make sense of them. Transcribing all the interviews helped me begin data analysis even while still in the process of transcription (Patton, 2015; Bryman, 2012; Denzin, 1978).

I began the qualitative data analysis by explaining patterns of analytical categories that emerged from the quantitative analysis through interviews (Patton, 2015). Special attention was given to variations in responses and the way they were affected by school choice. Two types of patterns emerged. Firstly, I used the categories determined by responses to develop specific themes indicating either commonality or difference. Secondly, there were patterns and categories for which there were no meaning, but which did generate terms or labels, for which I developed meanings (Patton, 1987). Patton (2015: 551) defines this type of procedure as an 'analyst-constructed typology', which is a classification or continuum designed by the analyst to divide specific aspects of reality into categories or ideal types. Quotations were lifted from interview responses to validate respondents' accounts. Table 4.4 presents the qualitative data analysis approach used in this study. The advantages of this approach lie in its ability to identify patterns easily and reduce the challenge of being overwhelmed by the sheer volume of data (Patton, 1987; Cohen et al., 2010).

Table 4.6 Framework of qualitative analysis

Strategy	**Purpose/explanation**	**Analysis strategy**
Comparison focused	Cases selected and compared to identify factors that explained similarities and differences.	Construct cases. Identify and illustrate similarities and differences from data. Interpret implications.
Group characteristics	Cases selected to create specific information-rich	Identify patterns and themes for cases in each

	groups that revealed and illuminated significant group patterns.	group. Identify diversity of cases and patterns that cut across such diversity.
Theory and concept focused	Cases selected as exemplars of a construct/ concept that was a focus of inquiry to possibly illuminate theoretical areas of interest.	Analyse what cases illuminate and whether or how identified patterns illuminate the theory that frames the inquiry.
Instrumental/multiple case	Cases selected to generate generalisable findings that could be used to inform changes in practices, policies, and school programmes.	Make analysis in a way intended users can act on to make decisions, improve programmes, and engage in policymaking. Focus is on generating useful and actionable findings.
Analytically focused	Cases selected to support and deepen quantitative analysis and interpretation of patterns and themes. This was emergent at the analysis stage.	Deepen and enhance credibility of initial analysis by adding information-rich, illuminative cases and/or confirming cases as analysis unfolds.

Source: Adapted from Patton (2015).

4.8 The research process: A roadmap from start to finish

The research process can be tracked through the defined start and end points shown in Table 4.4. This process helped me focus on what I thought about complex and contested educational issues, strengthened my ability to systematically and carefully investigate this topic, clarified how to frame key issues, disentangled relevant variables, and marshalled both quantitative and qualitative data to support my conclusions (Butin, 2010). The points noted in Table 4.1 are consistent with a rigorous academic structure that helped me

successfully conduct, discuss, and write a doctoral-quality thesis. My department spent a lot of time on explicit aspects of the doctoral process but there was limited guidance on implicit aspects I considered to be equally important. This section describes how I managed to navigate the process, highlighting key strategies and perspectives on what I did and how I did it.

4.8.1 Preparation

The research process began with the preparation stage. This was the most important stage in the whole process, in which I articulated a focused, specific, and practicable research topic: 'government and private schools in the inner city of Accra: exploring choice, experiences, and aspirations. Having articulated my research topic, I conducted the first and second rounds of a literature review on school choice in a developing world context, and how a disadvantaged household might choose between the types of school available in this context. Next, I developed an appropriate research paradigm, design, and methodological framework, and articulated research questions that naturally led to the type of data to be collected and the methods and instruments necessary to conduct the research. This helped in the writing of a research proposal which was evaluated and approved. This was followed by clearance from the Sussex C-REC ethical approval team, who authorised me to proceed with fieldwork to collect the relevant data.

4.8.2 Stages of fieldwork

The fieldwork was divided into three stages, namely, entry, data gathering, and conclusion (Patton, 2015, 1987).

4.8.2.1 Entry

Entry into the field began with a scoping exercise to identify the number of government and private schools in the study area and familiarise myself with them. I then approached one of the head teachers with two key informants to negotiate access to her school. While I was in the head teacher's office, the circuit supervisor entered and witnessed our conversation. Having listened to my outline of the research and asked for a copy of the information sheet, the circuit supervisor assured me that she would encourage all the head teachers she supervised to cooperate with me. However, this did not necessarily mean that all head teachers and their staff would automatically comply with my plans or understand and develop an interest in the study. Therefore, I sensitively negotiated with the head teachers in a diplomatic and respectful way. In some of the schools, gaining entry was largely a matter of establishing trust and rapport, and having the circuit

supervisor speak to the head teacher about my research beforehand. This helped greatly. Thus, I established credibility and legitimacy through the circuit supervisor as a source of these attributes (Patton, 1987).

My initial plan was to gain consent to conduct research only from head teachers, as the representatives of their schools. However, having given their consent, the heads of government schools asked me to speak about the study to all the teachers myself at a special staff meeting. The discussion focused on an explanation of the information sheet and the consent form in detail. I explained the purpose of the study, the methods I intended to use, the duration of interviews, that participants' responses would be kept confidential, and my reasons for recording all interviews. Most importantly, I stressed that they were not in any way obliged to participate and could withdraw from the study at any time. The teachers then had the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification about the study and the research process in general.

The initial stage of the fieldwork was a little uncomfortable, as I felt that head teachers, teachers, and students were evaluating me, just as I was evaluating them. For example, the head teacher of one school became angry because I had not followed the proper cultural greeting and introduction protocol relevant to his religion. I was embarrassed by this and quickly apologised. Additionally, the time during which I was conducting my research coincided with an incident which had some effect on my access to schools and the community. Some investigative journalists had secretly filmed the activities of judges, exposing the extent of corruption in this profession. Some head teachers abruptly decided I was there to expose their own practices. Thus, this stage was challenging and tested my social, intellectual, and physical capabilities to an extent I had never thought it would.

4.8.2.2 Data gathering: Fieldwork routine and social dynamics

By the second stage of the fieldwork, I had already established a role and purpose so was able to concentrate on and carry out the task of gathering data. I had adjusted myself to the field setting and began to really see what was going on rather than merely scope things out. As I came to understand the feelings, anxieties, and worries of head teachers, school staff, students, and parents, I found myself identifying with their lives, hopes, and worries. There was an occasion when a head teacher became very frustrated – this was apparently a frequent occurrence for head teachers – because the school's main tap needed repairing immediately and he had to pay for it out of his own pocket as the Capitation Grant had not been forthcoming. This grant was supposed to be disbursed to schools at the beginning

of each term but was invariably delayed. In fact, the head teacher noted that the money for the previous two terms had yet to be disbursed. Therefore, he had no option but to use the GHS 40 he had to hand at the time, meaning that he had no money for lunch that day.

Sometimes, I accompanied students to the market at break time. They often had to go to school without any money for lunch as their parents had nothing to give them when they left home. They then went to the market to check if their parents had managed to sell anything. Sometimes, they were lucky enough to be given a little money to buy food. At other times, they were not so lucky and had to either return to their classrooms late with empty stomachs or stay until their parents had sold enough. Either way, they missed out on valuable lessons. They appeared helpless but I was reluctant to assist them because it would have been ethically unacceptable to do so. They wanted to learn but were constrained by poverty, it seemed. That is, until I observed three weddings in the community.

I had arranged with an informant that he should accompany me to observe what happened in the community at weekends. He suggested that it would be beneficial to observe a wedding as this was a highly revered ceremony. My first wedding observation was on a Sunday. I arrived in good time so that I would not miss anything. People were dressed in special clothes which I later found out were very expensive. Three of the parents whose children went to the market for lunch money were among the women wearing very elaborate dresses. I found it difficult to understand why this was the case. Was education a priority for these families? Did they have their children's welfare at heart? Were they conforming to a social norm and putting this before their children's wellbeing? My informant explained that such expensive items were normally bought on credit. Nevertheless, I went home with these questions running through my mind. This confirms Patton's (1987:100) assertion that 'social situations are seldom simple'.

I was also very much exposed to the social, political, and cultural dynamics of the community. Head teachers and their staff appeared to perceive themselves as members of an elite who were helping those they frequently referred to as *zongo* (slum) children to acquire knowledge in an environment in which such 'elitism' would somehow rub off on them. For example, teachers often made comments such as, 'these people do not appreciate education; they bring their chaotic lifestyles into the classroom.'

I was apparently treated as a member of the teaching staff as I accompanied them to some important meetings at which the authorities talked to a group of parents about health and other issues. One such meeting was a malaria awareness briefing at which parents were sensitised to the harmful effects of mosquito bites and offered mosquito nets to protect their children. On such occasions, the circuit supervisor would formally introduce me and invite me to talk about my research. This presented an opportunity to recruit parents and an unforeseen chance to build a rapport with them. Before long, some parents were greeting me in the street whenever we met. They very quickly warmed to me and regularly stopped to talk, especially to ask when I was going to interview them. This means that they became aware of my role within the three months I had allocated for data collection (Patton, 2011).

However, I was aware that building too close an alliance with teachers and parents might greatly affect the course of data collection. Therefore, I used my role as a researcher to effectively gain access to both teachers and parents while maintaining a general appearance of neutrality for the greater good of the fieldwork.

4.8.2.3 Bringing the fieldwork to an end

As I neared the conclusion of the fieldwork, I devoted more attention to the matter of interpretation. I had by then become knowledgeable about the community and further perceptions had emerged which I needed to verify with teachers and parents. I did this through face-to-face meetings and by phone. Head teachers and teachers had agreed that I could call to clarify anything I was unsure about and ask for possible explanations as necessary, although most had already occurred to me. Thus, data analysis began even before I left the field (Bryman, 2012). Thus, my attention was focused on verifying the data I had already gathered rather than on collecting new data. Guba (1978) defines this as the stage at which the researcher is open to new inputs in data and tests out ideas, explanations, and hunches. Things were beginning to make sense, which helped me grow more confident about the whole process.

4.8.3 Coding the data

I firstly developed a code for each questionnaire by assigning numbers to the eight schools under study as well as the teachers and students who had participated. For example, a student whose questionnaire was coded 8003 attended the eighth school and was the third participant entered into the software. These numbers were written on the individual questionnaires before input into the software programme. The interview responses were

coded using a combination of letters and numbers to represent the different types of respondent in order on the voice recording device. For example, Voice_001 represented the first participant on the interview list.

4.8.4 Quantitative and qualitative data reporting

The final stage of the research process focused on analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to address the research questions. Due to the nature of the study design, analysis included an examination of the survey responses and interviews.

The product of the quantitative data (survey) was mostly descriptive and included means of difference, percentages, averages, and regressions. (Field, 2013; Muijs, 2004; Miller, 2013). This enabled familiarisation with the empirical data. It also allowed me to gain an overview of schooling choice based on household and individual characteristics of the children in both school management types, and the patterns and associations which emerged.

Conversely, the qualitative data (interview transcripts) were analysed using quotations and narratives.

I began the qualitative data analysis by explaining patterns of analytical categories that emerged from the quantitative analysis through interviews (Patton, 2015). Special attention was given to variations in responses by school choice. I used the categories determined by responses to organise specific themes that indicated either commonality or difference. There were also patterns and categories for which there was no significance, but which did generate terms or labels, which I developed meanings for (Patton, 1987). Patton (2015:551) defines this type of procedure as an ‘analyst-constructed typology’, which is a classification or continuum designed by the analyst to divide specific aspects of reality into categories or ideal types. Quotations were lifted from interview responses to validate respondents’ accounts. Table 4.4 presents the qualitative data analysis approach used in this study. The advantages of this approach lie in its ability to identify patterns easily and reduce the challenge of being overwhelmed by the sheer volume of data (Patton, 1987; Cohen et al., 2010).

4.9 Ethical considerations

MMR is rooted in a philosophical and pragmatic approach to the mixture of quantitative and qualitative data to generate meaning. The core of such an approach to data collection, analysis, and presentation lies in the researcher’s reflexive (Costley and Gibbs, 2006) and

critical awareness (Patton, 2015). Therefore, reflection on my actions from the planning stage through to the end of the research project informed the process. I knew that ethical issues were bound to arise before and during the research. Three aspects were of particular importance, namely, participant safety and confidentiality, data specificity, and conflict (of interest) minimisation. Participants voluntarily participated in the study and the last thing I wanted was to cause them harm.

Firstly, most participants, particularly head teachers, teachers, and the circuit supervisor, were most particular about keeping their names, schools, and the data I gathered confidential and anonymous. This was understandable given the nature of the data, the hazards of revealing sensitive information to the public, and the fact that government schoolteachers were state employees. I was aware that their honest opinions on issues in the public education system might inadvertently affect their employment prospects. Such concerns applied equally to private school teachers, since their employers were entrepreneurs who might have acted punitively had they discovered disparagement of their schools in the public domain. Notable among such issues were accusations of inappropriate in-service training and poor working conditions, and declarations that teaching was not their preferred occupation.

Accordingly, I maintained confidentiality by anonymising participant identities and set up appropriate procedures to ensure that sensitive data were kept secure. I stored all electronic data on my personal password-protected computer rather than a university machine which could be publicly accessed. Additionally, I kept notebooks, interview transcripts, and completed questionnaires in a lockable cabinet at home.

It should be noted that confidentiality and anonymity extend beyond the research process. I therefore distributed an informed consent form and explained that participants had the right to opt out of the study at any time and to have their data deleted completely should they decide to withdraw.

4.10 Reflexivity and my position as a researcher

During the research process and my writing-up stage, I reflected on my views, partiality, and positions of power I hold as a researcher. This allowed me to be honest and open about who I am and the potential impact I have on my research. I chose the topic of my research and chose the statistical models and words I would use to shape the untold narratives of inner-city children’s access to education and their schooling choice. I have

adopted a methodology that partly presumes the existence of objectivity, as if I can view myself and the research through an entirely impersonal, neutral, and unbiased lens (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Harding, 1991). I do not pretend that I am not in a sense deeply embedded within and throughout this study. To deny this fact would be deceptive at best and disingenuous at worst.

I considered my position as a Ghanaian researcher conducting research in Ghana as a potential ethical issue that might have biased the study. I attended school in Ghana and thus knew how the education system operated when I was a student there, although it would have been inappropriate to compare my school experience to the situation of the community under study. However, my role as an insider researcher enhanced the depth and breadth of my understanding of participants' views, which a complete outsider might have overlooked. At the same time, I was aware that overfamiliarity might raise issues around objectivity and authenticity (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). Accordingly, interviews were guided by participants' experiences rather than my own.

Conversely, by the time I conducted my research, I had lived in the United Kingdom for a considerable number of years. All three of my children had been educated in British schools, so I had had first-hand experience as a parent in interacting with these schools. In view of this, I also considered myself to be something of an outsider, detached from the study area, seeking to conduct impartial research, although the fact that I did not live in Ghana presently did not qualify me as a complete outsider. Nevertheless, having stayed away for so long brought specific challenges that could have affected the research process. One such challenge was the way 'outsiders' were perceived in Ghana. Outsiders are typically viewed as more important than residents, and the fact that I had a different background to those I interviewed reinforced this. To avoid such bias, I took steps to blend in as far as possible by wearing local Ghanaian casual dress. In so doing, I was able to conduct the research in a collaborative and respectful manner whereby both parties could freely express themselves without any undue influence from my personal situation. Thus, I have been reflexive. Evans noted that reflexivity entails:

> the acknowledgement of the researcher's place in the research; the subjective stance; and relative and constructed knowledge. … we revisit material over again, unpick it, looking for underlying implicit meanings. Each visit increases our understanding and adds another layer or perspective to our material (Evans 2013:5).

Thus, reflexivity is a self-critical and self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as a researcher. It also induces self-discovery and can lead to insights and new hypotheses about research questions (England, 1994). Therefore, reflexivity reminds me to be attentive to and conscious of the cultural, political, social, linguistic, and economic dispositions of my own perspective and voice, as well as the voices and perspectives of my interviewees (Patton, 2015).

As a child, I was an avid advocate of inner-city children's welfare. Many of the inner-city children I encountered were house helps who were either school dropouts or never enrolled in school. This is what led me to focus my research on inner-city households' school choice, experiences, and aspirations. I recognise the potential emotional challenges of researching a population which I have sympathy for. A potential challenge might be being overprotective with my research participants and not allowing room for the difference between my perspectives and theirs. However, I have been constantly reminded (by my supervisors) that reflexivity requires mindfulness which is a pathway to emphatic neutrality. Nevertheless, I also believe that my childhood experiences allowed me to explore my data from an insider perspective. As discussed above, I recognise the ways in which my lived experiences are different from inner-city households'. Despite these differences, reflexivity led me to present my participants' lived experiences and their voices in a way that made them own their perspectives and did not reinforce the negative view of inner-city households.

Additionally, my understanding of the world and how I understand myself are shaped by my identity and experiences. As a child, I lived with my great grandmother and grandmother, who never enrolled in school. This was because they were perceived as royals and were being groomed for traditional roles as traditional queen mothers, and there was a fear that teachers would cane them and leave scars on their bodies. Although they were from a financially sound background, they were educationally poor. They were unable to read and write. Their two brothers each were enrolled in school, however. My grandparents' experiences are not isolated ones, since women in their days never enrolled in school. Yet, I am also aware that my experiences of living with illiterate grandparents in Ghana are not comparable to the poverty and discrimination experienced by inner-city households. Unlike my grandparents, my aspiration was to have a university degree, and I am the first woman in my entire extended family to have a university degree.

My background, identity, and experiences provide the screen through which I view my research. I also acknowledge the privileges and the power I hold as a researcher. As mentioned earlier, the power I possess is evidenced by the fact that I designed this research, chose the questions to be answered, analysed the quantitative data, and chose which quotations to use to illuminate and to explain the significant differences. I have therefore shaped the way my participants' voices are articulated within the research and understood by those who receive the study.

4.11 Summary and conclusion

The methodology used in this study has been discussed in this chapter. It has explained the type of mixed methods used – the explanatory sequential approach – which pragmatically emerged from traditional quantitative and qualitative methods of research. The chapter proceeded with a presentation of fieldwork routines such as scoping, data collection, tools, and techniques. It concluded with a reflection on the overall research process and a discussion of the study's ethical considerations.

Combining both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study that explores education choice, experiences, and aspirations was a very complex and demanding undertaking. However, the explanatory sequential design, which involved the combination of quantitative and qualitative data, allowed me to collect, analyse, and triangulate survey, observation, and interview data to draw logical conclusions on the research questions.

Survey, interview, and classroom observation data were used to explore the various aspects of the study that could not be fully examined using either type of data on its own. The survey sample was drawn from government and private schools in the inner-city community, and only included children who were transitioning from class 6 to JHS 1 and from JHS 3 to SHS. Thus, survey data from four government and four private schools were analysed. Additionally, ontological and epistemological considerations, ethical issues, and my identity as a researcher were carefully considered. The study also provided a fair consideration of issues which relate to data collection and analysis. The next chapter examines children's individual and household characteristics in the inner-city community under study, using survey data and interviews to understand whether children's individual and household characteristics determine who goes to government and private schools. Chapter six aims to answer whether private-school children have better schooling

experiences relative to their government school peers given their fee-paying status. Next, chapter seven brings the analysis to an end by comparing the aspirations of government and private school children, before chapter eight finally concludes the research.

Chapter 5: What are the relationships between children's individual and household characteristics and government or private school access?

5.1 Introduction

This chapter first uses data derived from surveys of primary 6 and JHS3 students from four government and four private schools, which I collected (see chapter four), to examine the characteristics of the students who are enrolled in government and private schools in the inner-city area. The analysis starts by finding whether there are relationships between children's individual and household characteristics and government or private school access. Secondly, interviews obtained from participants (for example, parents and head teachers), will provide a deeper understanding of parents' schooling choice. It proceeds by summarising key findings and issues which emerged from the analysis to draw conclusions.

5.2. Findings I: Examining the relationships between children's individual and household characteristics and government or private school access.

The first aim of the research was to investigate whether there are any associations between children's individual and household characteristics and registration in fee-free government or low-fee private schools. This section sets out to analyse these associations. Table 5.1 shows the mean results.

According to student responses, there are several individual and household characteristics which are associated with government or private school access. When judged by the mean, the relationship between access to school type and a child's age, religion, parental education, and number of siblings is statistically significant.

Table 5.1 The mean individual child and household characteristics by school type

Variables	Government	Mean	Private	Mean	Mean Diff
Age in years	482	13.92	271	12.98	0.939***
Gender:					
Female	482	0.589	271	0.568	0.021

Male	482	0.411	271	0.432	-0.021
Religion:					
Christianity	479	0.415	269	0.52	-0.105***
Islam	479	0.585	269	0.48	0.105***
Dad's education:					
No education	482	0.071	271	0.033	0.037**
Primary	482	0.093	271	0.081	0.012
Middle/JHS	482	0.255	271	0.21	0.045
Secondary	482	0.297	271	0.225	0.072**
Tertiary	482	0.284	271	0.45	-0.166***
Mother's education:					
No education	480	0.171	269	0.093	0.078***
Primary	480	0.169	269	0.167	0.001
Middle	480	0.296	269	0.242	0.054
Secondary	480	0.221	269	0.26	-0.039
Tertiary	480	0.142	269	0.23	-0.089***
Parent-child interaction					
Good home condition to study					
in:					
Never	480	0.027	270	0.019	0.009
Sometimes	480	0.167	270	0.1	0.067**
Very often	480	0.806	270	0.881	-0.075***
Parents help with homework:					

Never	481	0.077	267	0.071	0.006
Sometimes	481	0.258	267	0.187	0.071**
Very often	481	0.665	267	0.742	-0.076**
Parents pay attention to studies:					
Never	480	0.077	269	0.019	0.058***
Sometimes	480	0.21	269	0.16	0.051*
Very often	480	0.713	269	0.822	-0.109***
Assets:					
Radio	479	0.814	268	0.772	0.042
Television	482	0.946	270	0.952	-0.006
Number of brothers	481	2.526	271	1.837	0.689***
Number of sisters	481	2.401	271	1.878	0.523***
Work after school	482	0.62	271	0.465	0.155***
Time of day you work:					
Morning	299	0.201	126	0.246	-0.045
Afternoon	482	0.012	271	0.011	0.001
Evening	299	0.291	126	0.397	-0.106**
Night	299	0.06	126	0.032	0.028
Have Extra classes	482	0.942	271	0.771	0.171***
Paying for extra classes	482	0.913	271	0.723	0.190***

Significance Levels: *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1

Firstly, with regards to mean age, government school children are overaged by at least 1 year (14 years for government compared to 13 for years private). Secondly, in respect of religion, the percentage of Christian children registered in private schools is higher (52% private, 41.5% government) than that of Muslim children (58.5% government, 48%

private). Government school children have a higher percentage of parents who have no education (father: 7.1% government, 3.3% private; mother: 17% government, 9.3% private), whereas private school parents tend to have a higher level of tertiary education (father: 45% private, 28.4% government; mother: 23% private, 14.2% government).

Government school children tend to have more siblings than private school children (mean average of 2.5 for government and 1.8 for private), and many more government school children work after school than private school children (62% government, 46% private). For the children who work after school, the majority work in the evening. However, more private school children work in the evening than their government counterparts (39.7% private, 29.1% government). Most children had extra classes, with a higher percentage of government school children having extra classes than private school children (94.2% government, 77.1% private). Among these, 94% of government and 77% of private school children said they paid for the extra tuition they received.

There are also differences in how government and private school children described their home environment for learning and support from their parents. While a higher percentage of government school children surveyed said they sometimes have the needed home conditions to study in (16.7% government, 1.0% private) many more private than government school children (88% private, 80% government) said they very often have a conducive home environment to study in. With regards to help with homework, many more government school children (25.8% government, 18.7% private) said they sometimes get help with their homework. However, 74.2% of private and 66.5% of government school children reported that they very often get help with their homework. Table 5.1 also reveals that while a significant number of children said their parents very often pay attention to their studies, the percentage was higher for private school children than for their government school counterparts (82.2% private, 71.3% government). However, it is interesting to point out that 21% of government and 16% of private school children said their parents sometimes pay attention to their studies, while 7.7% of government and 1.9% of private school children responded that their parents never pay attention to their studies.

Conversely, in terms of gender, there is no association between a child's gender and the type of school they access. This suggests that there is no gender bias when it comes to government or private school access.

In short, the quantitative analysis (means difference test) indicates an association with children's background characteristics and government or private school access. For example, households with better socio-economic characteristics are more likely to choose private schools. This notwithstanding, the difference in mean test cannot fully explain the key characteristics that affect schooling choice or access. The next section employs a simple logistic regression analysis in order to ascertain what key characteristics drive schooling choice.

5.2.1 Establishing the significance of the influence of children's background characteristics and government or private school access.

The analysis above has evaluated mean differences between characteristics of school choice. A comparative analysis testing differences in means can provide a fundamental understanding of the significant characteristics prevalent for both private and government school choice. However, it is limited and cannot fully explain the characteristics that are driving or causing a child to be in either private or government schools. Determinants of school choice range from family characteristics to individual children's own characteristics (Dixon et al. 2017). As discussed previously, the study focused on schools in an inner-city area of Accra. Hence, to justify and predict what is influencing school access or choice, an empirical analysis that includes factors like family background, environment, and individual child characteristics is important. A statistical comparison of the means will not be enough to capture this aspect of the analysis. In order to find the key characteristics that determine children's registration to their chosen schools, a simple logistic regression analysis is employed.

It is especially important to identify the factors that precipitate the choice of families to register their children into either government or private schools.

The following children's demographic and household characteristics are included as determinants of government school choice.

- Children's age in years to provide insight on whether age is a factor in who is admitted to a government school. Households in developing countries are faced with choices that can influence the decision to send older or younger children to certain schools where necessary.

- Student gender is another important characteristic for school choice. This variable is a dummy that takes the value 1 if the child is male and 0 if female (male = 1, female = 0).
- Father or mother's level of education is also a categorical variable in the format shown (0 = no education; 1= primary education = 2; middle school/junior secondary school = 3; senior secondary school = 4; higher education = 5).
- Radio ownership is a dummy variable (yes = 1, no = 0)
- TV ownership is a dummy variable (yes = 1, no = 0)
- Having siblings is a dummy variable (siblings = 1; no siblings = 0)
- Parents' profession (formal = 1; non-formal = 0)
- Religion (Islam = 1; not Islam = 0)

Table 5.2 reports the results of the logistic regression model for children's current admission to government schools. Government school is my dependent variable and is coded 1 if a child is in a government school or 0 otherwise.

From the regression results, a child's age is a significant determinant of the type of school they are registered in. The regression analysis shows that older children are more likely to be enrolled in government schools. The addition of 1 year to a child's average school age significantly increases the chance of being sent to government school by 21% at the 1% significance level. This indicates that government schools are more likely to have overaged children than their private counterparts.

Parents' education also forms an important determinant of schooling choice. The more educated the father of a child the more likely that child attends a private school - the odds of attending a government school on average are reduced at the 10% significance level. Interestingly, having a mother with a primary level education also reduces the chances of a child attending a government. This is significant at the 5% level, on average, holding other factors constant.

The fewer assets a child's family possesses, the more likely the child will attend government school. Thus, a family's possession of only a radio (minimum asset) increases the likelihood of a child being registered in a public school by about 33% at the 10% level of significance. The more siblings a child has, the more likely s/he will be registered in a government school. This is significant at the 10% level, on average, ceteris

paribus. This could mean that mothers with lower educational level see private school as offering better opportunities for their children to gain higher educational qualifications.

Table 5.2 Logit Model estimates of the relationship between children's background and accessing government or private school.

Variables	Gov School
Age in years	0.258***
	(0.0486)
Male (ref: female)	-0.133
	(0.179)
Father's education (ref: no education): Primary	-0.577
	(0.488)
Middle school	-0.619
	(0.442)
Secondary school	-0.293
	(0.446)
Tertiary education	-0.821*
	(0.446)
Mother's education (ref: no education): primary	-0.672**
	(0.314)
Middle/JSS	-0.352
	(0.298)
Secondary/SHS	-0.424
	(0.302)
Tertiary	-0.539
	(0.329)
Radio (ref: no radio)	0.409*
	(0.210)
Television (ref: no television)	-0.119
	(0.395)
Siblings (ref: no siblings)	0.205***
	(0.0530)
Muslim Religion (ref: Christianity)	0.185
	(0.173)

Constant	-2.533***
	(0.864)
Observations	735

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1

The statistical results above show that a child's background is an important factor in whether they attend government or private school. First, an increase in a child's age by at least one year increases their chance of being in government school. This is in line with Dixon et al.'s (2017) findings. A child's gender, however, does not significantly affect the type of school they are registered in, supporting findings of research from sub-Saharan Africa (Dixon et al., 2017; Tooley et al., 2008; Tooley, Dixon, and Amuah (2007); Hartwig, 2013). Other household characteristics are indicative of the likelihood of a child attending government or private school. In the study area of Greater Accra, children whose households have the least asset ownership are less likely to be registered in private schools, as highlighted by Dixon et al. (2017) in their Nigerian study, and Siaplay and Werker (2013) in their Liberian study. Dixon et al. (2017) and Siaplay and Werker (2013) also found that children whose fathers have tertiary education are more likely to be registered in private schools. Highly educated fathers may see private schools as a better option for school success and educational progress. However, it emerged from the present study's logit model that mothers with only primary education are more likely to register their children in private schools. This suggests that less-educated mothers might want to compensate for their disadvantaged background by sending children to private schools. Family size (number of siblings) is also a factor in deciding which type of school a child will attend. The larger the family, the more likely that children will attend government school. However, government school access may also be dependent on whether there is availability of places in government schools. The results suggest that affordability and availability may be strong determinants of what type of school a child attends.

Muslim children were slightly less likely to attend private schools than their Christian counterparts, although this difference was not highly significant. These findings are not out of the ordinary as other research has highlighted how socio-economic factors correlate with schooling admission (Dixon et al., 2017; Akyeampong and Rolleston, 2013). Accordingly, children's admission patterns in the study community were consistent with previously identified patterns in which the relatively better socio-economic household

chose private schools. Yet, this notwithstanding, mothers with only primary school-level education chose to educate their children in private schools. The next section engages with parents through interviews to understand how households explain the factors that affect their schooling choices.

5.3 Explaining the relationships between children's household background and government or private school access.

Studies concerning school choice in sub-Saharan Africa tend to be quantitative in nature, but two notable exceptions are Akyeampong and Rolleston (2013) and Akaguri (2014; 2011a, b) who used a mixed method approach. Following Akyeampong and Rolleston (2013) and Akaguri's (2011a, b) example, this study interviews two categories of parents who had children in government and private schools (see chapter four). These parent interviewees were from 11 households who were all made of rural-urban migrants and had lived in the study area for at least two years. Five of the eleven households had their children in government schools. Among these, one household originally had her children in private school but moved them to a government school due to the burden of paying fees. All the five households who had their children in public schools had no education, were engaged in petty trading, and lived in a room in a compound house with their children. However, one of these five households were a single-parent household with a female household head. Four of the households who had their children in government schools were Muslim; only one was Christian.

Regarding the six households who registered their children in private schools, all had both parents living in the household. Among these, two mothers and two fathers had received higher education and were civil servants. One father had dropped out of school, and the other had middle school (JHS) education. The rest of the parents in this category had no education and were petty traders, except for one truck driver and one Madrassa teacher (see Table 5.4). One of the six families used to have their children in a public school but moved them to a private school. In terms of religious affiliation, three of the private school households were Christian, while the remaining three were Muslim.

One of the key objectives of this study was to ascertain the relationships between children's background and registration in government or private schools. This section uses participants' interviews to explain why religion, parental education level, parental economic status, and other related household characteristics were statistically significant.

5.3.1 Religion

Muslim parent interviewees who had registered their children in public schools indicated that they preferred public schools with a Muslim ethos. They believed that these schools could provide their children with Islamic related orientations and the opportunity to have circular education. All the five public school households interviewed who had chosen government schools did so for this reason. There was only one public school that exclusively offered a combination of Islamic and circular education. This is the school many Muslim families who chose government schools preferred. However, there were limited vacancies in the school. This compelled these parents to opt for their second choices, which were invariably public schools which they could access for free, conditional on vacancies. It should be noted that the three other government schools were tuition free. However, they did not provide Islamic-specific subjects, which most Muslim families preferred. Additionally, unlike the Islamic/circular school, which provided lunch for its children, the other government schools did not provide lunch. Consequently, children whose first preference was the Islamic/circular school but found themselves in other schools due to lack of vacancies missed out doubly. First, they missed out on Islamic-specific subjects. Secondly, they missed out on free lunch.

Analysis of parent and teacher data shows that most Islamic children historically accessed Madrassas, where they were exclusively taught Islamic lessons. The belief was that children who attended circular schools would abandon Islamic practices due to negative peer influence from non-Muslim children. Government schools were established to address this issue. Private schools in the area do not offer such provision. Parent interviewees who had children in the Islamic government school indicated that in addition to paying an average of 25 GHS for expenses they also paid 45 GHS privately to have extra tuition in Arabic and other Islamic-specific subjects for their children. It appeared that the parents preferred a balanced provision of Islamic-specific orientation by supplementing their children's teaching with two-hour paid extra classes offered by private Madrassa teachers in a designated area in the school.

The Ghana Education Service undertook a policy of providing opportunities for the improvement of Muslim children's participation in schooling. These, however, were limited to activities such as ones found in the basic school curriculum, whereas a more general integration of Islamic teachings into the basic education programme was not achieved. In fact, children in the combined Islamic/circular school had the opportunity to

leave their classes to go to a designated area where they could pray and practice their religion, especially when they heard the 'call to prayers'. However, I observed children missing lesson time because they left whilst lessons were in session to pray. Clearly, for such families, what counts is having the opportunity to practice their religion during school hours without any restrictions. The group of parents sending their children to such schools could be described as protecting the heritage of their religion and reaping the benefits of this heritage as measured by the social effects on the children. The following comment from one of the mothers (014) highlights this view:

> You know, we Muslims if you don't have Arabic education, it's like you're lost. I didn't go to school, but I had Arabic qualification which has been useful. It helped me to know right from wrong. I got married without engaging in sexual activities and getting myself pregnant. Circular education wouldn't have provided me with such moral values. I know the instructions God has given us, and I'm following them. That's more important than anything else.

Therefore, the issue of Islamic-specific teaching was critical to these households' schooling choice. Consequently, when such households registered their children in the Islamic/circular school, it tended to create better opportunities for their children's socialisation, especially the study of Arabic in addition to all the subjects in the curriculum. Accordingly, a greater proportion of resources (45 GHS and Arabic textbooks) were devoted to supporting children in this school through paying for extra classes and purchasing related materials, while those subjects found on the education service curriculum received fewer resources (25 GHS), for which parents were reluctant to pay. Paying 45 GHS appeared to create an additional cost burden of education among Muslim households. This finding is consistent with Cohen-Zada (2009) and Long and Toma's (1988) United States studies, where they argue that religion significantly influences the choice of schooling by households (in this case, government schools), although Colclough et al. (2003) found inconsistent results on the impact of religion on household schooling choice.

There were three other public schools in the study area where other children attended who preferred a faith school but found there were no vacancies for them there due to over-subscription. Again, some Muslim households who accessed such schools paid for after-school and weekend Arabic classes to compensate for what they felt their children missed by not being an Islamic school. The private schools in the area had more places to

accommodate all the school-going children who did not get government places. However, these private school places were not free for parents, but were selected out of necessity.

Table 5.3 Interviewees' religion and school management type

Religion	**Number of interviewees**	**Number of households accessing government schools**	**Number of households accessing LFPS**
Muslim	7	4 (Islamic)	3
Christian	4	1(Non-Islamic)	3
Total	**11**	**5**	**6**

The school choice patterns of interviewees based on their religious orientation is presented in Table 5.3. It shows that many more Muslim households interviewed accessed government schools. Also, none of the Christian households had their children in the Islamic/circular school. This is consistent with the survey data. The percentage of Muslims in government schools significantly outweighed that of Christians (59% Muslim, 41% Christian). Conversely, the percentage of Christians in private schools outweighed that of Muslims (52% Christians, 48% Muslims). Table 5.3 shows that nearly twice as many (7 of 11) are Muslim, with four of these interviewees accessing government schools (Islamic), with none in the other government schools, which is significant given that the interviewees were randomly selected. None of the Christian parents interviewed had their children in the Islamic school, although access to this category was not restricted to them. Likewise, 4 out of the 11 households interviewed were Christians. Out of these, only one household had their children in a government (Catholic) school, and the other three had their children in private schools. None sent their children to the Islamic government school. In effect, Muslim households had a greater preference for government fee-free schooling than their Christian counterparts, who mostly send their children to LFPSs, although the significance reduces when other variables are included and controlled for (see Table 5.2).

Households who had their children in private schools said that they wanted their children to receive what they perceived to be higher quality education, so they enrolled their children in private schools rather than in fee-free public schools which they perceived as inferior to or of lower quality than private ones. This is consistent with the results of previous studies, including those of Akaguri (2011a, b) and Akyeampong and Rolleston (2013), who argue that this assertion is based on belief rather than reality. Six of the interviewees chose private schools, believing that they delivered better academic results. However, their perceptions of quality differed. Some interviewees' perceptions of quality related to acquiring circular as well as religiously focused schooling, which could only be acquired through one of the government schools in the study area that offered an Islamic education, but they found that there were no vacancies in this school. The only alternative was to enrol their wards in private schools with a view to transferring them to their preferred government school, which offered Islamic education, once vacancies became available. These parents believed that what they were getting fell short of what they wanted (Arabic studies) but had no choice other than to keep their children there until vacancies became available in their preferred Islamic/circular school. As a result of this, children sometimes repeated a year or went back two years when joining the public school, they valued more. The following quotes are illustrative of why interviewees initially chose private schools but later transferred their children to faith-based schools.

> I used to have my children in a private school due to not having vacancies when I moved down here but removed them to … which I value … because they teach Islamic religion there. That's why. I want them to have the Muslim teaching; and rooted in the religion. In that school, they can have circular education and Islamic religious studies as well. Circular only education will not be good for them. They can worship and pray, and they can learn as well, So, I like the combination of these two than any of the others on their own (017, a widow).

Yet, another parent believes that the government school his children attend is better than the other government and private schools in the area due to the support it received from the Catholic Diocese.

> St. (government school) … is better than the private schools in the slum, but you can't compare it to the higher performance non-slum private schools. My first child attends St. … and the younger one attends a private school because she did not get access to St. … due to it being full. It is not easy to join St. … though. The people wanting to register their children there are many … and the school can't admit all of them. Anytime there is a vacancy, they invite the children already on the

> waiting list to sit for an entry exam. I pay nearly three times more in the private school than the government school. And St. … is not like the other public schools because the Reverend Father is there. He monitors them (016, a Catholic parent).

This interviewee's circumstances reveal the lack of availability of schooling places in government schools, especially the faith ones, which some families value and can access fee-free. Many of the interviewees who initially enrolled their children in private schools with the hope of finding vacancies in their preferred government school indicated that they struggled to pay for tuition to keep their children in the private school although that was not what they valued or preferred. They had to have their children there or risk not having them in school at all. Therefore, they were forced to pay to temporally keep their children in private schools at great cost with no guarantee that there would be vacancies in their preferred government schools soon. Nevertheless, some parents maintained their children in the private school while they waited for access to their preferred government schools. It was clear that most parents lacked the capacity to sustain their children in fee-paying private schools. This notwithstanding, the hope of securing a government place, especially for receiving faith-based education, with its perceived benefits, fuelled some families' interest in Catholic or Islamic government schools:

> Some of the parents explain that they are attracted to the school because we learn both Arabic and English, and offer both Islamic and circular education which other government and private schools do not offer … Some have left private schools to join us because of the fee burden on them (002, an Islamic school head teacher).

The head teacher saw this as the reason why his school (government) was oversubscribed by the Muslim households in the community, as his school was the only one that offered such sought-after schooling, and most of the residents in the community were Muslim.

5.3.2 Parental educational level

What emerged from the parent interviews was the willingness of parents with no education or relatively low education to register their children in schools. Interviewees drew attention to the importance of having an education, stressing that individuals without education might not be able to fully achieve their potential as they may lack the capacity to read, write, and contribute to policies concerning their wellbeing. It appeared that many first-generation students had been registered in schools. When talking about children's parental educational level, it was clear that fathers with little or no education registered

their children in government schools more than fathers with higher education did. When asked why they enrolled their children in school, given that they had little or no education, interviewees with no education emphasised that they were aware of how important education is for day-to-day life, and the fact that education opens many doors which are closed to people who are not educated.

On the other hand, most parents with higher education had experienced the education system themselves and had the belief that the public schools in the area were of lower quality. It appeared that many parents with tertiary education actively enrolled their children in private schools in the area. They based their arguments on the supposition that teachers in the government schools lacked the will to effectively teach children to pass their examinations. For such families, passing examinations appeared to have been the motivation behind enrolling their children in private schools, and these families were willing to do whatever it took to maintain them there. They explained with great certainty that government schools were not fit for purpose, since teachers in these schools did not give their absolute best, because they were government owned. Although they recognised that government schoolteachers were better trained and more well-resourced than their private school counterparts, they argued that they were not well supervised. For them, what distinguished government and private schools in the area was the ability of proprietors of private schools to fire teachers who did not give their best. On the contrary, government teachers would keep their jobs even if found to be doing their jobs improperly. What mattered to these parents was professionalism, and they judged this by how teachers conducted themselves.

Mothers with no education who registered their children in private schools outweighed fathers in the same category (see Table 5.1). Many of these mothers are relatively better off than their counterparts with children in government schools due to their petty trading and their consequent ability to pay private school fees. Fathers and mothers who enrolled their children in private schools presented themselves as very ambitious and willing to do all it took to give the best chances to their children, especially mothers with little or no education. Since they themselves had not had the opportunity to receive education, they did all it took to compensate for this disadvantage. They paid for extra tuition for their children and shielded their children from negative peer influences. Once they had made a little more money through trading, they appeared to behave like the local elites by sending their children to private schools, which effectively acted as proof of their new-

found position; having their children attend private schools was essentially ‘keeping up with the Joneses’. It appeared that suddenly, even without education, having a bit of money was what counted one as part of the local elite. These parents wanted their children to be perceived as prestigious, as this would enable them to have friends who would accentuate their membership of this prestigious group. It appeared that this was the general perception in the community, and those who considered themselves as outsiders due to their poverty status accept this. The following responses touch on the various views highlighted:

> I fancy the private schools. I just fancy having my children there. You see, they are the ones who have respect. They dress in a different manner, everything is perfect. These are the things I cherish. It is nice when people see my children in such environment. In my opinion, there is no difference in terms of the quality between government and private schools. Because when it comes to learning, my children are much better academically than other children in this compound who attend private schools. It’s just the prestige. You see. The rich man’s child [and those with higher education], the way they conduct themselves is different from the poor man’s child (013, a mother with no education with children in government school).

> You see, now everyone understands that if your child has the best and highest level of education they’ll do well in their lives; that he or she will be successful. Apart from the school [private] my children attend, there’s no other school like that (023, a father with JHS level education with children in private school).

While some parents with no education who chose private schools did so because of their perception of quality or to join the local elite, other did so purely because of the proximity of their houses to the private school their children attended (Härmä, 2011a,b). For the latter type of parents, having a school that kept their children safe from busy roads was all they needed.

5.3.3 Socio-economic characteristics

In principle, under the free compulsory basic education policy, parents are expected to enrol their children in schools, especially in the government-owned ones, which are free (Akyeampong 2009). This stems from the fact that education is a human right that only states can deliver, especially to minorities and poor families (Lewin, 2007). Although this policy was meant to help the very poor to exercise their educational rights and capabilities, there were only four fee-free government schools in the study area to cater for all the children in the community.

Evidently, four government schools were inadequate to accommodate all the school-going children in the study area, and allow them to access education for free, especially the relatively newer migrants. The typical everyday scene in these four government schools were new migrant parents queueing up in front of the head teachers' offices to secure non-existent vacant places for their children. Interestingly, I found that many of the parents were relatively new, while others had lived in the community for at least two years. The newer migrants invariably reported they wanted to enrol their children in schools but found there were no vacancies. They faced either not registering their children in school at all or paying for them to temporarily access private schools until vacancies became available in their preferred government schools, but the latter came with a cost which they were not able to bear. They presented themselves as living with distant relatives who had taken them in temporarily until they could afford to rent a room. Clearly, such parents would be unable to afford registering their children in fee-paying schools until a place became available in the government school of their choice. Some established migrants related that they had enrolled their children in private schools when they arrived and had since been waiting for places to become available so that they could transfer their children to their preferred fee-free government schools. This was a great concern for the local assemblyman who thought the people in the community were not been treated fairly. He said:

> We only have four government basic schools in the area, we don't even have SHS here. We have about ten private schools in the area. You see, this has emerged as a result of the lack of access to public schools. Some parents are forced to send their children to fee-paying private schools. Sometimes, you want to send the child to the government school close to you, but you find it is overpopulated. That is why some children stay out of school. This is because of the money their parents must pay to keep them in private school. You see these children loitering about? If you ask them why, they'll say, they've sacked me [from school] because my mother was unable to pay school fees/expenses. They include exams fees, PTA, you know? All these expenses are being collected from parents who don't have the money, meanwhile, the AMA is there. They should take care of all the expenses mentioned (010, assemblyman).

Clearly, there was a genuine sense of frustration on the part of the assemblyman, who wanted to ameliorate these families' plight. He knew the challenges households faced while exercising their educational rights. However, he had truly little influence in advocating on their behalf to have more government-funded schools to access for free.

Colclough (1997) argues that this uneven distribution of government financing results in demand for schooling that governments alone cannot fulfil, leading to the rise of low-fee private schools to meet the excess demand due to the insufficient supply of public-school places.

Nevertheless, some interviewees saw government schools in the area as inferior and of lower quality relative to the low-fee private schools. Therefore, households with better economic backgrounds who believed they could afford the private school fees consciously made the choice to register their children in the fee-paying private schools, which they perceived as better than the ones provided by the government for free. For the reasons discussed above, I also found households with unfavourable economic backgrounds (petty traders etc., see Table 5.4) registering their children in low-fee private schools not by choice but due to lack of spaces in the government schools.

Table 5.4 Parent interviewees' economic status

Interviewee PID	Occupation	Housing Status	Marital Status	Public	Private
009	Waakye seller	Rents room in house	Single	X (Is)	
013	Petty trader (husband is an Islamic teacher)	Rents room in house	Married (one parent interviewed)	X (Is)	
014	Petty trader (husband is an Islamic teacher in Nigeria)	Rents room in house	1st of two wives (polygamous)	X (Is)	X
016	Security Guard (wife is a petty trader)	Rents room in house	Married	X (Cat)	X

017	Unemployed	Room in family house	Widowed/ remarried	X (Is) private to public	
018	Self-employed Graduate (husband is a civil servant)	Rents 2-bed flat	Married (wife interviewed)		X
019	Antique dealer (wife is unemployed)	Rents 1-bed flat	Married - both at interview		X
021	Petty trader	Rents room in house	Married (only wife present at interview)		X
023	Islamic teacher and student (wife is a seamstress)	Room in family house	Married (both at interview)		X
024	Fried plantain seller (husband is a truck driver)	Rents room in house	Married (only wife present at interview)		X (moved from gov't to private)
025	Secondar teacher (wife is a school teacher)	Room in family house	Married		X

As shown in Table 5.4, five households out of the 11 interviewed had children in government schools. Two of these families had other children in the low-fee private

sector, waiting for places to become available in the government schools so they could transfer their children there. The occupations of these categories of parents ranged from being unemployed to petty trading. Two of the fathers were Islamic teachers, while one was a security guard. They reported that their income was irregular. They revealed that when trading was good, they were able to provide the basic necessities for their families. However, sometimes, they barely sold anything, and thus struggled to maintain their families let alone have excess money to pay fees in the private education sector. This notwithstanding, one of the government school families had their children in the low-fee private sector but transferred them to a government school when a place became available. One family still had a child in a private school, waiting for a place to become available so their child could be transferred to a government school.

All the government school parents interviewed rented a room in a house in which they lived with their children. This living condition presented challenges for parents who moved their children from private schools to join government ones. For example, one of the interviewees who had her children in the low-fee private sector but who moved them to a government school reported she was ridiculed by the other tenants. She explained:

> I was unable to pay the fees in the private school, so the children were given the sack. So, I sent them to the government school when a place became available. In a public school, they won't be sacked because tuition is free. That was what I preferred in the first place anyway but there were no vacancies there. And you know one thing? In the compound house, people talk, and they gossip. They started talking about why the children were in the house for that long. I was so ashamed from moving them to the government school even though that was what my husband liked initially but there were no vacancies. People gossiped about that (014, mother).

This clearly shows the plight of families of lower economic status who had registered their children in private schools but who had to transfer them to government schools. They had to experience the humiliating situation of not being able to pay fees and being ridiculed by neighbours for moving their children from private schools to government ones. This was especially true if the children had to be out of school as they waited for government places.

Some of the parents consciously chose fee-paying private schools, however. Out of the 11 households interviewed, four households (018, 019, 023, and 025) chose private schools as they believed the government schools were of lower quality. In contrast to the government school families, each of which lived in a rented room in a house, two of the

private school families lived in rented flats with their families, while the other two lived in family houses without paying any rent. These four families' occupation were, respectively: self-employed/civil servant, antique dealer/unemployed, Islamic teacher/seamstress, and secondary school teacher/teacher.

Parents who purposely chose private schools saw this as giving their children the best opportunities in life by having teachers who could help their children to pass their BECE examinations and secure places at the top government SHSs. They felt the government schools had the best teachers, but that these teachers were unprofessional and did not take their teaching seriously as the government could not fire them. In contrast, they felt the private school teachers always did their best for fear of been sacked if they were found not working hard. This raises questions about how the government school sector is monitored and inspected, and whether teachers found not doing their work properly are sanctioned. When asked what attracted her to the private school she had chosen, one of the interviewees who consciously chose a private school said:

> You know, everything private, there is monitoring; and then the employees are being checked. Let me use my shop as an example. I employ seamstresses to come here, so I need them to work. I wouldn't expect them to be sleeping. I expect them to work very hard. It's either you work, or you leave. … If you're found sleeping, you go home. One time. That's how the private schools operate. At the end of every year, when students go and write the exams, every private school wants its students to do well. … This is what motivate others to send their children there. In the government schools, a teacher will just report to work, s/he would take their bag and go to an engagement or a funeral. Some go to funerals on Thursday and come back on Monday (018, private school mother).

This parent's comments focused mainly on the bottlenecks in government-funded schools, which she felt affected the quality of teaching and learning in the government schools in the area, and which was perceived as unlikely to improve. This category of private school parents claimed that the worst private schools were better than the government schools. These parents generally reported they would have wished to have their children attend government schools for free if the quality was good, but that they felt this was not the case, and that it was safer to have their children in low-fee private schools. They wanted good results for their children and felt that they had to pay for it by choosing the private education sector.

My view is that these parents saw themselves principally as ‘consumers’ who wanted value for money and would do what it took to pay for what they valued. The private school parents assessed the government schools’ worth or quality based on the number of children loitering around during school time, which they associated with lack of discipline and care on the part of the teachers. In fact, they questioned why government schoolteachers themselves enrolled their children in private schools, explaining that if the government schools were good, they would have registered their children there. Government schoolteachers having their children attend private schools confirmed their suspicions and perceptions about the bad quality of government schools in the area.

This category of parents, who lived in rented flats and in family houses rent-free, in a sense saw themselves as having similar preferences to those of the government school teachers, whom they felt were part of the reason why government schools were deteriorating. This contributed to the lack of confidence in government schools:

> I would have wished for my children to go the government school for free, but at the end of the day, what do you get? I have a friend in Italy. She tells me her daughter is in the same classroom as the Politicians - Ministers and Members of Parliament. But over here it is not like that. The Ministers have their children educated overseas. Their children will not go to the government schools. These are the things that push me and the others to send our children to the private school. I don’t think it is because some of us have money which is why we choose to send our children to private school. Sometimes, when the term ends or begins, and you have to pay fees, it’s not really easy… (018, government school parent).

These parents saw paying for their children’s education privately as undermining their children’s right to free education, but felt they had no option. They also saw the education which was provided by the government as low quality compared with private education.

There was yet another category of parents: petty traders who had previously had their children in government schools but had transferred them to private schools purely because of other reasons apart from quality concerns. The sole reason for moving their children to private schools was to do with road safety concerns and school proximity. Responding to questions about why they had their children in private schools rather than in fee-free government schools, it emerged that some of them had moved to a new house and found crossing the road to their children’s previous fee-free government schools very dangerous. As a fried plantain seller whose children had been in a government school but who had moved them to a private school explained:

> It was a public school, but when we moved here, I realised that crossing the main road to their former school was dangerous. This school is nearer to our house, so I decided to move them from that school to this school, which is private. And it is convenient as I work near the school. You see, it may be that in some government schools teaching there is much better than this private school. Likewise, some private schools may also be better than the government ones. For me, it is the proximity. I collect them after school and go home with them safely. If it gets to the point where I am unable to pay the fees, I will take the risk to remove them to government school (024, private school parent).

This category of parents, it appears, looked for nearby schools to register their children in without necessarily making informed decisions about schooling quality.

5.3.4 Gender

Interestingly, the quantitative results did not show any statistically significant difference between government or private school access when gender was examined (male: 41% government, 43% private; female: 59% government, 57% private), but when male and female students were compared within schools, it was obvious that there was a gender imbalance. Many more females than males (government: 59% females compared to 41% males; private: 57% females compared to 43% males) were registered in both school types. There is 18% and 14% difference in favour of females in government and private schools respectively when gender was compared within schools.

In exploring this specific gender issue, two explanations emerged from the interview data, namely, the unanticipated consequences of migration and the nature of the slum context in which children lived. These two reasons were compelling, and were linked to children's schooling admission and whether, when registered, boys stayed in school irrespective of the type of school they were registered in.

An unanticipated consequence of migration was that a majority of parents were working long hours in the food and petty trading industry, which required them to leave the house early and return very late in the night after business, rendering their children vulnerable to a whole range of issues, including truanting, staying out late, and dropping out, with boys more vulnerable than girls at this stage. As a parent in a public school indicated:

> Sometimes A [son] would say he is going to school, but then people will tell me he wasn't at school. That is why I always call the teachers to make sure he is at school and not truanting (014, petty trader and government school parent with no education).

Another parent added:

> Sometimes, you go out in the middle of the night and you see small **boys** below ten, fifteen. I keep asking myself, where their parents were because I wouldn't be comfortable letting children of that age be in the street around that time. And they will be with older children, twenty and above (018, private school parent with university degree).

Interviewees found this worrying as they felt boys in the community were being lost to gangs and drug consumption. They felt the young boys were being used to push and sell drugs, which some of them eventually try and get addicted to:

> We are now living in a community where people are drunks, excuse me. Weed smokers are in the open, and this child lives around or within the same house or compound where this drug is being sold. They call him, they send him … go and buy eight … he sees what goes on and emulate (002, private school head teacher).

Head teachers and parents saw such conditions as more attractive to boys than schooling because by engaging in such behaviour they could have money to live on. Parents were seldom around to maintain and ensure discipline as they had to work and earn money for their livelihood, leaving their children at the mercy of drug users, who preyed on them. This happened at the expense of their education. Officially, education is compulsory for children at the basic level, but there appeared to be no enforcement of this legislation. Often, school going children were seen loitering around freely during school hours. The question is, whose job is it to keep these boys safe and in school?

Head teachers felt they were doing what they could to keep these vulnerable boys in school. They understood that most children in the neighbourhood came from broken homes and were exposed to 'deviant' behaviours in the community, but they tried to do their best while these children were in school. The challenge was how they could positively influence them outside school hours when children are more exposed to such behaviours. As indicated by a private school head teacher:

> Because the school is not boarding, we have them here for some time but when they close, they go to their various homes. When they're going home, we don't offer them transport. Most of them walk home. … From the time they leave us to the house and during the weekends when we don't have any contact with them, the kind of character that they exhibit … when punished, they usually bring their bigger brothers who are into smoking to fight us (005).

Clearly, teachers had the will to help these disadvantaged children. However, there was a cost associated with that. Head teachers felt that girls did not fall into such traps, and that the problem related only to boys. Many boys in the area were also reported as being

involved in internet fraud to make quick money so they could buy all the desirable things their parents were unable to provide for them:

> The girls don't give us that much of a problem, it is the boys. They do these kind of bad things … Majority of them are also into internet fraud business. The local term is browsing. They con people to get money and everything changes. Because of this, they won't be regular at school. This is one of our main challenges. And we have two opposing forces: as we try to talk to them to stay in school, their brothers are also pulling them to get quick money (005, private school head teacher).

The head teachers' actions focused more on addressing the problems they saw occurring at school and were less likely to reflect the serious nature of what they saw as getting in the way of boys' education. The teachers in both management types were concerned about the problems boys in the community faced and the likelihood of these affecting their schooling but were afraid to challenge the 'deviants' for fear of retribution. Instead, such issues were raised at PTA meetings. At PTA meetings, head teachers empowered the executives who were drawn from the community to address these issues without getting involved directly.

Evidently, concerns were raised by head teachers, teachers, parents, and local politicians about the vices and other vulnerabilities associated with the slum community, and the fear of such issues trickling down to affect boys in the community. However, the way in which parents and the community expected to deal with this was through expanding the school feeding programme to cover the other three government schools and creating meaningful access for children. What is clear is that the relatively poorer children were more susceptible to these vulnerabilities than their richer counterparts (Table 5.4). Such children may be poor, but they have the same educational rights as their relatively rich counterparts whose parents are able to provide them more sufficient supervision.

5.4 Summary

This chapter first considered the relationships between children's individual and household characteristics and registering in government or private schools in the study area. Qualitative evidence provided deep insight into some of the salient emerging factors. The quantitative evidence shows that certain individual and household characteristics were factors that were likely to affect registration in government or private school. In the slum area of Accra, the older the child, the more likely that they were registered in a government school. A child's gender did not significantly affect the type of school they

were registered in, corroborating other research from sub-Saharan Africa (Tooley et al., 2008; Tooley et al., 2007; Hartwig, 2013), but within schools, gender affected the likelihood of school attendance generally, with girls more likely to attend school than boys. This applies to both school management types. A household's increased socio-economic wellbeing, as indicated by parental education, tended to increase the probability of sending a child to a low-fee private school (father with tertiary education, $p > 0.1$), supporting the findings of Siaplay and Werker's (2013) Liberia study. However, mothers who had received only primary education were more likely to send their children to private school ($p < 0.05$).

Religion was also a characteristic that affected the likelihood of attending certain types of school. In the slum area of Accra, Muslim children were more likely to attend government schools as compared to Christian children, who were more likely to attend low-fee private schools. Number of siblings also determined children's school admission; households with more children tended to register in government schools, while the opposite was true for low-fee private school registration (Härmä, 2011a, b). Further, children who worked after school and had paid for extra classes were more likely to be registered in government schools.

However, the statistical results do not explain why children with specific individual and household characteristics were registered in government or private schools. Insights from interviewees differed. While there was a general perception that low-fee private schools attracted the poorest households (Tooley and Dixon, 2005a) due to their perceived better education provision (GSS, 2005; Tooley et al., 2005; MOESS Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 2006; Rolleston and Adefeso-Olateju, 2014), this was not always the case. There were two reasons for this. First, the inadequate or uneven provision of government schools meant that some poor households registered their children in low-fee private schools as they waited for vacancies in the already oversubscribed government schools (excess demand). These included households who valued Islamic-specific government schools, which had no vacancies (Phillipson, 2008), and households who refused to risk allowing their children to cross the road to a government school which was far away from their home (Härmä 2011, b).

Second, some households deliberately made a conscious effort to register their children in low-fee private schools (especially educated parents and relatively better-off parents with low education) due to their superior perceived quality and the fact that they could

afford it (Akaguri, 2011a, b; Akyeampong and Rolleston, 2013). This was concurrent with the findings of Lewin and Sayed (2005) regarding differentiated demand. This is because they found the available government schools to be of poor quality.

Furthermore, while there was no gender difference between government and low-fee private schools (Dixon et al., 2017), there was a gender imbalance within schools. Many more girls than boys were registered within both government and private schools. This was because boys were vulnerable to the harsh conditions of the slum environment. Teachers in both school types appeared to be trying to help mitigate this by working with parents at PTA meetings but found it hard. This has implications for gender equity due to the imbalance it creates, as male children are losing out on their education.

In conclusion, the quantitative results have shown that children from an Islamic and poor socio-economic background are less likely to register in low-fee private schools. However, regarding the households in this category who registered their children in low-fee private schools, evidence from participants' interviews shows that their registration was based on excess and differentiated demand, as well as quality perceptions. Having analysed the individual and household characteristics of children registered in both school management types, the next chapter uses student surveys and a range of other participant interviews to explore how students in both school management types experience schooling once they are registered.

Chapter 6: Do apparent differences exist between government and private schools in relation to school experiences, and if so, how do these differences vary by individual and household characteristics?

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at schooling choice or access based on individual child and household characteristics of children registered in government and private schools in the study area. The second aim of the research was to investigate whether apparent differences exist between government and private schools in relation to school experiences, and if so, how these differences vary by a child's background. Studies in the developing world have been carried out in order to investigate the differences that exist between government and low-fee private schools. However, the focus has been on inputs (Ngware et al., 2010; Akaguri, 2011a, b; Tooley and Dixon, 2006; Härmä 2009; Muralidharan and Kremer, 2008), achievement (Dixon et al., 2017; Akaguri, 2011a, b; Muralidharan and Kremer, 2008; Tooley et al., 2010; Dixon et al., 2013), and quality perception (Akaguri, 2011a,b; Akyeampong and Rolleston, 2013; Srivastava, 2006, 2008). To date, views on schooling experiences and social indicators are missing from such debates. Concerns are raised in the literature regarding not including the entire school and classroom context in which inputs, achievements, teaching, and learning operate and influence each other to impact on children's capabilities. It has been argued that including children's schooling experiences in the debate is the only way that effective considerations of aspects of schooling can be compared and 'disadvantages' revealed and mitigated against' (Srivastava 2013a:29).

Consequently, this chapter sets out to compare schooling experiences based on government or private school attendance as well as students' background. Of particular interest is whether low-fee private school students sensed they were receiving a higher level of schooling experience – perhaps indicated by their satisfaction level overall, and with the teaching and learning process, level of technology use, how learning is evaluated, and classroom experiences – than their government school counterparts. My initial hypothesis is that low-fee private school children have better schooling experiences than their government school counterparts, since private schools charge fees. If this is the case, then government school children are condemned to poorer schooling experiences on average than private school children. This chapter argues that there are differences

between government and private school children's school experiences, and these differences vary by children's individual and household characteristics. The results presented here are divided into two parts. The first part uses quantitative data to investigate the schooling experiences reported by the private and government school students surveyed. The second section uses observations as well as parent and head teacher interviews to provide an in-depth understanding of the key issues that emerged from the quantitative results.

6.2 Do apparent differences exist between government and private schools in relation to their schooling experiences?

The processes that take place in a school are critical to children's schooling as they relate to their social and economic development (Heckman and Masterov, 2007) and their structural and interactional outcomes (Marshall and Weinstein, 1984). This section uses descriptive statistics to compare the schooling experiences variables of the private and government school children surveyed. They include the teaching and learning process, level of technology or resources used, how learning is evaluated, and the classroom environment.

6.2.1 The mean schooling experiences of government and private schools

This section uses descriptive statistics of students' responses to compare student experiences in private and government schools on four of the schooling experiences groupings. They include teaching/learning, technology use, classroom experiences, and the evaluation of learning.

Table 6.1 Mean schooling experiences by school type

Item	Government	Low-fee PS	Mean diff
Teaching and learning process			
Teachers organise group/individual activities:			
Never	12	16	-3.7
Sometimes	39.8	46.5	-6.6*
Very often	47.9	37.5	10.4***
Group discussions/role play:			
Never	8.7	18.6	-9.9***
Sometimes	39.8	49.4	-9.6**

Very often	51.5	32	19.5***
Access to supplementary readers:			
Never	9.2	14.6	-5.4**
Sometimes	22.2	16.1	6.1**
Very often	68.6	69.3	-0.7
Teachers spend class time on own activities:			
Never	54.9	60.7	-5.8
Sometimes	15.3	20.7	-5.4*
Very often	29.8	18.5	11.3***
Level of technology used			
Teachers use chalkboard:			
Never	12.7	14	-1.3
Sometimes	19	28.8	-9.8***
Very often	68.3	57.2	11.1***
Instructional materials:			
Never	21.9	26.7	4.8
Sometimes	34.2	36.7	2.5
Very often	44	36.7	7.3*
Equipment use:			
Never	66.9	56.9	10.1***
Sometimes	22.9	30.9	8.0**
Very often	10.2	12.3	2.1
Textbooks are used:			
Never	1.3	3.3	-2.1*
Sometimes	6.9	16.2	-9.3***
Very often	91.8	80.4	11.4***
Library books are used:			
Never	19	35.2	-16.2***
Sometimes	30.3	3	0.3
Very often	50.7	34.8	15.9**
Evaluation of learning			
Multiple choice:			
Never	4	5.2	-0.8
Sometimes	41.6	41.1	0.5

Very often	54.1	53.7	0.4
Composition writing:			
Never	0.4	3	-2.5***
Sometimes	25.9	24.4	1.6
Very often	73.7	72.7	1
Oral presentation:			
Never	5.4	20.3	14.9***
Sometimes	33.9	25.1	8.8**
Very often	60.7	54.6	6.1
Feedback on performance:			
Never	0.4	0.4	0.000
Sometimes	4.2	4.1	0.001
Very often	95.4	95.6	-0.001
Classroom experience			
High expectations for progress:			
never	2.1	1.9	0.2
Sometimes	17.4	15.2	2.1
Very often	80.5	82.9	-2.4
Participating in classroom rules:			
Never	10.7	9.7	1
Sometimes	19.2	20.8	-1.6
Very often	70.1	69.5	0.6
Advice on personal/academic issues:			
Never	18.5	11.9	6.6**
Sometimes	30.4	22.7	7.7**
Very often	51.1	65.4	-14.3***
Encouraged to be innovative:			
Never	1.9	4.4	-2.6**
Sometimes	14.4	11.1	3.3
Very often	83.8	84.5	-0.8
Behaviour problems in class:			
Never	16.8	13.6	3.3
Sometimes	12.3	16.6	-4.3
Very often	70.9	69.8	1.1

Happy to attend class:			
Never	3.5	1.1	2.4**
Sometimes	9.5	11.9	-2.3
Very often	86.9	87	-0.1
Class activities interesting?			
Never	2.9	4.1	-1.2
Sometimes	27.4	21.6	5.7*
Very often	69.7	74.3	-4.6
Class free from outside noise:			
Never	33.9	43.5	-9.6***
Sometimes	29.7	28.3	1.4
Very often	36.4	28.3	8.2**

Note: Significance levels - *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1; N = 754

Table 6.1 reports the mean schooling experiences (the teaching and learning process, level of technology or resources used, evaluation of learning, and classroom experience) of students from government schools and their counterparts who access private schools. The difference in schooling experiences between the two school management types was statistically significant.

Private school children were less likely to have group and individual activities in the classroom than their government school counterparts: 16.0% of private and 12.0% of government school children reported they never experienced group or individual activities in class, 39.8% of government and 46.5% of private school students said they sometimes experienced group and individual activities in class, and 47.9% of government and 37.5% of private school children said they very often experienced group or individual activities organised by their teachers in class.

Private school children were less likely to experience role play or group discussion in class. The percentage of government school children who reported they never had role play or group discussions in class was 8.7%. The percentage of private school children was twice as high as the government school figure, at 18.6%. The percentage of those who said they very often experienced role play and group discussions was 51% for government school children and 32% for private school children. More government than private school children said they had access to supplementary readers, with 14.6% of private and 9.2% of government school children reporting they never had access to

supplementary readers in their schooling experience. More government than private school children said they sometimes experience having supplementary readers in their schooling experience.

Recent evidence has shown ‘quality’ (as defined by exams results) to be the main reason why disadvantaged families enrol their children in fee-paying private schools (Dixon et al., 2017; Dixon et al., 2015; Härmä, 2015, 2011; Dixon, 2013; Stern and Heyneman, 2013). However, these studies did not consider the teaching and learning experiences that lie at the centre of any discussions of quality. The pathways taken by these researchers in pursuit of an understanding of quality education represent the domination of certain ideas and discourses regarding children’s education over others. As Klees (2018:479) puts it, ‘there is more at stake in education than improved scores in English and math’, as there are many more public goods dimensions to education which are neglected by privatisation (Macpherson et al., 2014).

In order to provide a more rounded view of how children perceived their teachers’ time on task and productive use of time, children from both school management types were asked if teachers spend class time on their own activities apart from teaching while in school. The results in Table 6.1 show that the majority of children reported that their teachers never spent class time on their own activities (60.7% of private, 54.9% of government school children). However, comparison between government and private schools revealed that 20.7% of private and 15.3% of government students felt teachers sometimes engaged in non-teaching activities of their own in the classroom, with 18.5% of private and 29.8% of government school students reporting their teachers very often engaged in activities of their own apart from teaching. Clearly, there is evidence to suggest that there were time management issues for both school management types, but government school children lost comparatively more teacher attention than private school children. This finding agrees with Akaguri’s (2011b) assertion that government school children lose more time on task in the classroom as teachers engage in activities that are irrelevant to teaching.

The survey also addressed the children’s experiences with the level of technology use in their respective schools as level of technology use is an important dimension of teaching and learning. With regards to the sample of inner-city government and private school students, it is clear from Table 6.1 that chalkboard use was common in both government and private schools. However, chalkboard use occurred ‘very often’ in government

schools more than in private schools, with 68.3% of government and 57.2% of private school students indicating this. This implies that a greater percentage of the learning in government schools was organised on the chalkboard (Alhassan and Adzahlie-Mensah, 2010). Regarding instructional materials such as globes, maps, photos, etc., there was no significant difference between government and private school students' responses. However, a greater percentage of government school students reported more frequent experiences of using instructional materials than their private school counterparts (44.0% of government, 36.7% of private school children), with 7.3 percentage points difference between their responses. Considering education expansion in Ghana and the government's investment in school materials, this finding was expected.

Students' experiences with teaching equipment (computers, whiteboards, calculators, etc.) were also explored. Most of the students surveyed from both school management types said they never experienced having access to teaching equipment in the classroom. However, government school children were less likely than private school children to have access to teaching equipment, with around two-thirds of the government school sample saying they never experienced using equipment such as radios and tape recordings in the teaching and learning process (66.9% of government, 56.9% of private school children). The study also asked children if their teachers predominantly used textbooks when teaching. It is clear from Table 6.1 that children in both school types generally experienced being taught using textbooks in the teaching and learning process. However, it is apparent that a relatively wide difference existed between the two school management types, with government school children 'very often' using textbooks in the teaching and learning process more than their private school counterparts (12.0 percentage points difference: 91.8% of government, 80.4% of private school children). The survey results also permit a comparison of library book usage in the teaching and learning process by comparing the views of the students sampled. Over one-third of private (35.2%) and a little under one-fifth (19.0%) of government school children reported they never used library books in the teaching and learning process, while over half of government (50.7%) and about one-third (34.8%) of private school children said they very often used library books in the teaching and learning process. Again, these results were expected, as government school children get a free supply of textbooks from the government.

6.2.2 Does the evaluation of learning vary by school type?

The examination of how learning is evaluated and its indicators in the context of the study area is useful in explaining the relative variations in skill in private and government schools. Table 6.1 shows a comparison of how learning is evaluated in the different school management types. Four questions asked how students' learning was evaluated, including whether teachers evaluated them based on multiple choice questions, written compositions, and oral presentations, and whether teachers gave them feedback on their performance. There were no clear differences between the two management types when it came to children's experiences with multiple choice questions and receiving feedback and advice on their performance. However, there were significant differences regarding composition writing and oral presentations. Government school children had more opportunities to be evaluated on their writing and oral presentation skills. A higher percentage of private school children reported they never experienced evaluation on written compositions (3% of private, 0.4% government school children) and oral presentations (20.3% of private, 5.4% of government school children), with a 14.9% difference for oral presentations. These results suggest that having trained teachers matters, as government school children experienced a balanced range of evaluation methods that tested their overall learning skills. Perhaps this was because government schools had better-trained teachers who had the requisite knowledge to use a wide range of assessment tools to evaluate learning (Akaguri, 2011b) despite having to deal with a greater number of students on average.

6.2.3 Do classroom experiences vary by school type?

Education should develop the collective character of children. Therefore, a number of survey questions attempted to compare private and government school children's views on how they experienced key collective interactions in the classroom environment. These included whether they felt teachers set high expectations for their progress and created opportunities for them to participate in the making of classroom rules, and whether they felt they could talk freely with their teachers about their personal and academic problems. They also included whether: teachers encouraged them to develop new ideas; teachers had to deal with behavioural problems such as cheating, truancy, and fighting; they were happy to come to class; they found instructional activities interesting; they experienced noisy disturbances such as sounds from engines and machines, road noises, and market sounds.

Table 6.1 illustrates how children in private and government schools responded when asked to answer questions on these key variables. There are a number of variables that clearly indicate that the experiences of children attending government and private schools were similar. For example, children from both private and government schools said their teachers set high expectations for them. Nearly the same percentage of government and private school children said their teachers never set high expectations for them (2.1% of government, 1.9% of private school children), sometimes set high expectations for them (17.4% of government, 15.2% of private school children), and very often set high expectations for them (80.5% of government, 82.9% of private school children).

Similarly, when asked if they participated in making classroom rules, there were similar responses from government and private school children. Thus, similar percentages emerged for those who never participated in the making of classroom rules (10.7% of government, 9.7% of private school children), sometimes participated in making rules in the classroom (19.2% of government, 20.8% of private school children), and very often participated in making classroom rules (70.1% of government, 69.5% of private). This suggests that children from both school management types had the opportunity to exercise their democratic dispositions in the classroom.

Also, children from both government and private schools gave similar responses when asked if their teachers had to deal with behavioural problems in the classroom. A fairly small percentage said their teachers never had to deal behavioural problems (16.8% of government, 13.6% of private school children) and sometimes had to deal with behavioural problems (12.3% of government, 16.6% of private school children), whereas most said their teachers very often had to deal with behavioural problems (70.9% of government, 69.8% of private school children).

There are a few indicators that clearly distinguished children in government schools from their private school counterparts so far as their classroom experiences were concerned. A larger percentage of government school children surveyed reported they never received personal or academic help from their teachers (18.5% of government, 11.9% of private school children), were never happy to attend class (3.5% of government, 1.1% of private school children), and experienced noisy disturbances from outside while class was in session (never: 33.9% of government, 43.5% of private school children; very often: 36.4% of government, 28.3% of private school children). However, a greater percentage of government school children said their classes were interesting (27.4% of government,

21.6% of private school children). This implies that government schoolteachers, who are mostly trained, have the ability to provide interesting teaching experience than their private peers. (the conditions for government schoolteachers in the inner-city community are far better than private school teachers)

6.3 How does overall student satisfaction compare?

A number of survey questions attempted to capture students' views about their overall schooling experiences, including their satisfaction with teacher friendliness, whether they liked the way their teachers taught in class, whether school helped them learn, whether teachers had adequate teaching materials, and whether they liked going to school. Table 6.2 shows the differences in the responses for each of the five questions measuring the overall student satisfaction with the two school management types. The responses to the questions were 'no', 'yes', and 'very satisfied'/ 'very much', with 'very satisfied'/ 'very much' being the highest satisfaction level. For the question regarding motivation, the responses were 'sometimes' and 'very often'. Differences between children in government and private schools were generally minimal, although marginally greater regarding whether students felt they had adequate learning materials.

Table 6.2 The mean differences in overall satisfaction by school type

Students' overall satisfaction by school type

Variables	No. gov	mean	Private	Mean2	Diff
Teachers friendly:					
No	482	0.0560	269	0.0190	0.037**
Yes	482	0.1310	269	0.1600	-0.029
Very satisfied	482	0.8130	269	0.8220	-0.008
Teachers good:					
No	482	0.0100	268	0.0070	0.003
Yes	482	0.0600	268	0.1080	-0.048**
Very satisfied	482	0.9290	268	0.8840	0.045**
School help learning:					
No	481	0.0020	269	0.0150	-0.013**
Yes	481	0.0310	269	0.0450	-0.013
Very much	481	0.9670	269	0.9410	0.026*
Adequate material:					
No	480	0.1380	266	0.1200	0.017
Yes	480	0.1730	266	0.3120	-0.139***
Very satisfied	480	0.6900	266	0.5680	0.122***
Motivated to attend school:					
Sometimes	482	0.0060	269	0.0450	-0.038***
Very often	482	0.9940	269	0.9550	0.038***

Note: Significance levels - *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1

Private school children were marginally more likely to have friendly teachers based on the percentage of respondents who reported their teachers were not friendly (5% of government, 2% of private school children). The differences between school types for the responses 'yes' and 'very satisfied' were marginal, but with a slight private school advantage ('yes': 16% of private, 13% of government school students; 'very satisfied': 80% of private, 81% of government school students). Table 6.2 suggests that government school children were marginally more likely than their private school counterparts to report their teachers as being good ('very satisfied': 93% of government, 88% of private school students). The difference was slight but statistically significant.

Government school children were more likely to report that school helped them learn. Overall, fewer government school children responded 'no' when asked if school helped them to learn (0.2% of government, 1.5% of private school children), and more of them reported that school 'very much' helped them to learn (96.7% of government, 94% private school children). There was a significant difference between government and private schools when students were asked if they felt they had adequate learning materials, with government school children reporting greater levels of very high satisfaction ('very satisfied': 69% of government, 56.8% of private school students), although a higher percentage of private school students responded 'yes' to this question (31.2% of private, 17.3% percent of government school children). In certain contexts, achievement was an indicator of the likelihood of attending private school (Aslam, 2009; Dixon et al., 2013). In this study of inner-city of Accra, when the overall satisfaction variables were considered together, there was no statistically significant difference between government and private schools.

Table 6.2 also shows that most of the children surveyed reported they liked going to school. However, private school children were less likely to report they liked going to school. The literature has shown that quality has been suggested to be the main reason why households choose private school (Rolleston and Adefeso-Olateju, 2014), however, this does not make private school children happier. A higher percentage of the private school sample reported they only sometimes liked going to school (private, 4.5% of private, 0.6% of government school students) while almost all government school children said they very often like to go to school (99.4% of government, 95.5% of private school students).

6.4 Student attitudes by school type

The quality of children's experiences may not simply hinge on only what they are provided with, in terms of the overall resources available to them. Their experiences and satisfaction may also be linked with their own efforts and engagement with school in general, and with the environment in which they live. Therefore, this section seeks to compare children's attitudes to school and their interactions with the community by school type.

Table 6.3 Student attitudes by school type

Item	Government	Private	Difference
Do you study on your own?			
Never	1.5	4.1	-2.6**
Sometimes	21.2	21.8	-0.6
Very often	77.4	74.2	3.2
Do you try not to miss classes?			
Never	2.3	7.4	-5.1
Sometimes	6.2	7.0	-0.8
Very often	91.5	85.6	5.9**
Do you complete your homework?			
Never	1.3	0.4	0.9
Sometimes	11.3	9.3	2
Very often	87.5	90.3	-2.9
Do you respect your teachers?			
Never	0	0.4	-0.4
Sometimes	1.3	3.3	-2.1*
Very often	98.7	96.3	2.5**

Do you help others or pick up rubbish?			
Never	5.6	7.5	-1.8
Sometimes	21.5	20.5	0.9
Very often	72.9	72	0.9

Note: Significance levels - *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p <0.1

There are a number of responses that clearly show that the children attending government and private schools were similar. Table 6.3 shows that both government and private school children said they very often completed their homework, with a slight but insignificant private school advantage (90.3% of private, 87.5% of government school children). With regard to whether children respected their community by picking up rubbish and helping others, again government and private school children's response were relatively similar, with about one-fifth of the children in both school types saying they sometimes did so (21.5% of government, 20.5% of private school students), a small percentage in both school types saying they never did so (5.6% of government, 7.5% of private school children), and a large majority of both government and private school children saying they very often helped others in their community and picked rubbish (72.9% of government, 72% of private school students) .

There were a few indicators that distinguished children in government schools from their private school counterparts. Government school children were less likely to say they never study on their own (1.5% of government, 4.1% of private school students), suggesting that they were more likely to collaborate with their friends and to support each other in their learning. Government school students were also more likely to say they very often tried not to miss class because of the importance of what was taught in class (91.5% of government, 85.6% of private school children) and more likely to respect their teachers (98.7% of government, 96.3% of private school students). This is an interesting finding that links students' views of the usefulness of what they learn to whether they will attend classes and enjoy classroom learning. They might attend school regularly if they find teaching important and interesting. This confirms Alhassan and Adzahlie-Mensah's (2010) findings on teachers and access to schooling in Ghana. They looked at teachers' contribution to access problem and concluded that teacher behaviour and attitude such as corporal punishment, as well as misuse of instructional hours contributed to irregular attendance or drop-out.

6.5 Are there significant differences in schooling experiences by school type?

In the previous sections, I compared the mean differences between government and private schools based on factors that look at children's experiences independently. In this section, I estimate a logit model to look at the true determinants of children's schooling experiences. This is done by nesting all the relevant school experiences in one estimation. The aim is to establish the likelihood of children's expressing positive evaluations of their experiences in school. The determinants revolve around general teaching setup, teaching materials and technology, and level of interaction in schools. The dependent variable (school type: government) measures the level of schooling experience in terms of the number of indicators included in the model. The variables include evaluation of the learning process, teaching and learning process, level of technology used, classroom experiences, and overall student satisfaction. These variables are categorical, and the base group is 'never' for classroom experiences. The first part of Table 6.4 looks at pupils' probabilistic answers regarding classroom experiences and the learning process. However, the second part of Table 6.4 looks at pupils' likelihood of classroom satisfaction for those in public schools. The characteristics are categorical, using measures of level of satisfaction (e.g. 'yes' or 'no') as applicable.

Table 6.4 Logit regressions

Logit regression of classroom experience characteristics by school type (first section)

Variables	***Coefficient.***	***Standard. Error***
Evaluation of learning experiences		
Multiple choice questions:		
Sometimes	-0.2438	0.4717
Very often	-0.1152	0.4639
Composition writing:		
Sometimes	**-2.5482*** **	1.1192
Very often	**-2.0436*** **	1.1051
Oral presentations:		
Sometimes	**-1.9463*** **	0.3864
Very often	**-1.4886*** **	0.3726
Classroom experiences		
Feedback on performance:		
Sometimes	-0.7664	0.5818

Teachers set high expectations:		
Sometimes	0.3237	0.7452
Very often	0.8804	0.7105
Participate in making classroom rules:		
Sometimes	0.1096	0.3866
Very often	0.0690	0.3509
Advice on personal and academic issues:		
Sometimes	-0.1426	0.3363
Very often	**0.6955*** **	0.3062
Encourage new ideas:		
Sometimes	-1.7154	0.6439
Very often	-1.1845	0.5894
Deal with behavioural problems:		
Sometimes	0.7489	0.3505
Very often	0.1080	0.2720
Happy in the classroom:		
Sometimes	1.5962	0.8081
Very often	**1.4743*** **	0.7695
Activities interesting:		
Sometimes	-1.7154	0.6439
Very often	-1.1845	0.5894
Free from disturbance:		
Sometimes	-0.6043	0.2646
Very often	-0.2841	0.2498
Student satisfaction		
Teachers friendly:		
Satisfied	0.2100	0.6196
Very Satisfied	0.4540	0.5742
Teacher's teaching:		
Satisfied	1.3880	1.2865
Very satisfied	0.3902	1.2484
Teacher's help:		
Yes	-0.5791	0.5403
Adequate teaching materials:		

Satisfied	**0.9477*** **	0.3436
Very satisfied	0.4000	0.3189
Like going to school:		
Yes	**-2.2079*** **	0.8522
Chalkboard:		
Sometimes	0.6391	0.3594
Very often	-0.3018	0.3233
Instructional materials:		
Sometimes	0.1279	0.2804
Very often	0.0054	0.2746
Learning equipment:		
Sometimes	**0.9586*** **	0.2299
Very often	0.3813	0.2977
Learning textbooks:		
Sometimes	-0.7056	0.7885
Very often	**-1.5565*** **	0.7534
Library books:		
Sometimes	**-0.6406*** **	0.2514
Very often	**-1.3160*** **	0.2560
Activities:		
Sometimes	0.4062	0.3875
Very often	0.6006	0.3861
Teaching and learning		
Group discussions:		
Sometimes	-0.5306	0.3749
Very often	-1.2734	0.3844
Supplementary readers:		
Sometimes	-0.9341	0.4241
Very often	-0.0604	0.3780
Less time on teaching:		
Sometimes	0.0511	0.2899
Very often	-0.4906	0.2546
Encourage others		
Sometimes	-0.1698	0.5055
Very often	-0.2382	0.4827

Constant	3.0281	2.0905

Note: Significance levels - *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1

The second section of Table 6.4 shows the coefficient estimates of the explanatory variables in the model in terms of odd ratios that can translate into percentage point increases or decreases. The direction of the effect can be interpreted from the coefficient. If a coefficient is positive (or negative), this indicates that an increase in the associated explanatory variable would make government schools more likely (or less likely) to produce more satisfactory experiences in terms of the specific indicator, as compared to private schools. At the same time, I also draw inferences about whether the effect is statistically significantly different from zero. The results of this logit regression model give support to what I observed in the descriptive part of the analysis, in which the means of government and private schools were compared.

Government school children acclaim a 69.5 percent point likely to attest the usefulness of teacher's advice on personal and academic problems in their school satisfaction determinants. The chances of assuming high level of happiness in the classroom is 1.4743 percentage point higher than Private schools. Having adequate teaching materials and learning equipment increases the satisfaction of public-school children around 94 and 96 percentage point respectively. These determinants of children's satisfaction imply that government school children have a higher probability of having more satisfying experiences regarding these indicators than private school children. The negative and significant coefficients for composition writing (-2.548, 'sometimes'), oral presentation (-1.946, 'sometimes'), like going to school (-2.2079, 'yes'), learning textbooks used (-1.556, 'very often'), and library books used (-1.3160, 'very often') indicate that all these factors increase the log odds of private school children having better experiences with these determinants in the regression analysis.

The statistical results from children's survey responses have been used to compare the schooling experiences of students in government and low-fee private schools. The results reject the initial hypothesis that low-fee private school children have better schooling experiences as compared to their government counterparts, at least, based on the indicators considered as descriptive statistics in Tables 6.2 and 6.3 above. First, the summary statistics compared the means of government and private school children's experiences multi-dimensionally and found that there were no consistent differences in the indicators measured. Second, the logit model considered all the variables together

(6.4) and showed a higher likelihood of private school children having better experiences for some of the indicators, but not consistently. For example, low-fee private school children were more likely to report they were better at composition writing and oral presentation. They were also more likely to say that 'they liked going to school' and that they had more access to textbooks and library books.

However, there were some indicators showing that government school children had better schooling experiences. These included receiving their teachers' advice on personal and academic issues, feeling happy in the classroom, and having adequate teaching materials and learning equipment. In this regard, it cannot be assumed that private school children consistently have better schooling experiences than their government peers. The survey data suggests that children's experiences in the study area were consistent with a pattern in which there were no consistent differences in how government and private school children experienced schooling.

In the schooling experiences variables analysed above and displayed in Table 6.4 (teaching and learning, technology use) the difference between the mean experiences ranged from 6 to 19.5 points in favour of children who attended government schools. These results indicate a pattern of lower teaching/learning and technology use for children who attended private schools. However, it is important to note that it is hard at this stage to disaggregate whether schooling experiences resulted from the type of school children attended or the backgrounds children originated from. Therefore, an index which provides a unique combined set of each group of variables (see appendix 6-CPA) of the 6 thematic areas of schooling experiences characteristics was explored. An OLS regression was fitted to the index to further investigate whether any differences still existed between government and private school children's experiences, and whether the background from which children originated affect how they experienced school. The next section reports the results.

6.6 OLS for school experience differences for government and private schools measured by individual and household characteristics.

In the OLS analysis, two models were specified. The first model (Table 6.5) included the school type dummy variable for which government school was the reference, as well as children's individual and household characteristics and whether they had positive/negative schooling experiences. In the second model (Table 6.6), the school

dummy variable was removed from the equation. The first model was developed from the following equation.

$$schooling\ experience\ index = constant + \beta_1 school\ type + \beta_2 household\ characteristics + \beta_3 pupil's characteristics$$

Where:

Schooling experiences index represents the six schooling experiences outcomes (pupil satisfaction, teaching and learning, classroom experiences, technology use, learning evaluation, and pupils' attitude).

School type = a dummy variable (0/1) for school type. It is 1 for public school and zero otherwise.

Household characteristics indicate unique outlooks of households (asset status, parental education, and number of siblings).

Pupil's characteristics include their age, gender, extra class sessions, and after-schoolwork.

The above regression provided a pathway to understanding the determinants of the schooling experience outcomes. The main variable of interest was school type (see Table 6.5). Table 6.6 presents a regression for pooled data without the school type variable to establish the general determinants of the schooling experience outcome. An ordinary least square regression analysis was applied to the above equation and the results were as follows:

Table 6.5 School-type OLS regression coefficients for schooling experience by individual and household characteristics

	(1) Pupil's Satisfaction	(2) Teaching & Learning	(3) Classroom Experience	(4) Pupil's Attitude	(5) Technology Use	(6) Evaluating Learning
Public	0.255**	0.490***	-0.294***	0.172	0.0527	0.121
	(0.101)	(0.0993)	(0.111)	(0.104)	(0.0916)	(0.0970)
Age	-0.153***	-0.192***	-0.0867***	-0.0123	-0.0596***	-0.116***
	(0.0250)	(0.0248)	(0.0275)	(0.0263)	(0.0228)	(0.0243)
Male	-0.162*	-0.0784	-0.343***	-0.235**	-0.0271	-0.220**
	(0.0899)	(0.0890)	(0.0989)	(0.0941)	(0.0825)	(0.0873)
Educated dad	-0.450**	-0.438**	-0.512**	-0.170	-0.185	-0.178

	(0.201)	(0.199)	(0.229)	(0.215)	(0.186)	(0.196)
Educated mum	0.136	0.347***	0.0955	0.173	0.120	0.0763
	(-0.135)	(0.133)	(0.151)	(0.140)	(0.124)	(0.130)
Muslim	0.189**	-0.0808	0.376***	0.248**	0.264***	0.124
	(0.0924)	(0.0916)	(0.101)	(0.0967)	(0.0846)	(0.0896)
Own radio	0.257**	0.165	0.0992	0.107	0.212**	-0.0510
	(0.113)	(0.113)	(0.124)	(0.118)	(0.104)	(0.109)
Own TV	0.121	-0.126	0.231	0.208	0.0458	0.0650
	(0.202)	(0.201)	(0.230)	(0.210)	(0.190)	(0.196)
Work after sch	0.287***	0.567***	0.418***	0.0508	0.245***	0.243***
	(0.0914)	(0.0905)	(0.101)	(0.0955)	(0.0839)	(0.0886)
Extra class	0.472***	0.687***	0.509***	0.132	0.768***	0.631***
	(0.142)	(0.142)	(0.155)	(0.148)	(0.131)	(0.139)
Constant	1.288***	1.536***	0.726	-0.391	-0.325	0.906**
	(0.455)	(0.453)	(0.514)	(0.476)	(0.422)	(0.443)
Observations	738	727	713	734	731	744
R-squared	0.115	0.215	0.106	0.031	0.094	0.092

Standard errors in parentheses Note:
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 6.5 above reports the OLS results for a regression model to investigate how government and private school status impacted children's schooling experiences (school type dummy), conditional on experiences index columns: 1) overall satisfaction; 2) teaching and learning; 3) classroom experience; 4) pupils' attitude; 5) technology use; and 6) learning evaluation. As can be seen from Table 6.5, students who accessed government schools notably reported a statistically significantly positive (25.5%) overall schooling satisfaction and teaching and learning experience (49%) as compared with children who accessed private schools. The differences were statistically significant at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels, respectively. Therefore, considering the overall schooling and teaching and learning indices, children from private schools reported worse experiences than government school children. This indicates that government school children were more satisfied with their overall schooling experiences compared to children who attended private schools. In contrast, private school children reported higher (29%) than government school children on the classroom experience index. The difference was statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

The data shows no statistically significant difference between government and private school children on the use of technology, learning evaluation, and children's attitude to schooling indices.

The age of a child was also another significant predictor illustrating schooling experience difference. Generally, an additional year of a child's age reduced the level of their schooling experiences on all six schooling experience indices, irrespective of the type of school they attended. They had negative changes in overall schooling satisfaction (-15.3%); teaching and learning (-19.2%); classroom experience (-8.67%); attitude to school (-1.23%); the use of technology (-5.96%); and the evaluation of the learning process (-1.16%). These were all statistically significant. These results indicate that a substantial gap for over-aged children can be accounted for by the schooling experience indices.

Gender was another key factor that predicted schooling experiences, irrespective of whether the child was in government or private school. As can be seen from Table 6.5, male students had negative indications on schooling satisfaction (-16.2%) and classroom experiences (-34.3), and a negative attitude to schooling in general (-23.5%) as well as the evaluation of learning (-22.0%) when compared with female students. The differences between girls' and boys' schooling experiences were statistically significant for all four indices. Therefore, these four indices account for schooling experience gap between boys and girls. For the teaching and learning and technology use indices, there was no statically significant difference between boys and girls.

It is interesting to note that having an educated father reduced the pupils' overall schooling satisfaction (-45%), teaching and learning (-44%), and classroom experience (-51%) indices. These differences are all statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that having an educated father did not necessarily translate into children having positive schooling experiences. However, children with educated mothers appreciated the teaching and learning process more (35%) than those with uneducated mothers. In this case, the gap between the teaching and learning experience favoured children with educated mothers. Being a Muslim, owning assets, and having extra tuition resulted in increases in the learning satisfaction index by 18.9%, 25.7%, and 47.2%, respectively, irrespective of the type of school children attended. These statistically significant differences in the teaching and learning index meant that Christian children, children in households with no TV, and children with no extra tuition on average had lower teaching and learning experiences. These findings suggest that children's individual and household level characteristics, as well as the school they attended, were relevant to how they evaluated their schooling experiences.

Additionally, being a Muslim also had a significant positive impact on the classroom experiences, attitude to school, and technology use indices, as compared to being Christian. However, estimating children's experiences level in different subsamples (school type dummy) might generate sample selectivity bias. Therefore, Table 6.6 reports an alternative model which excludes the school type dummy variable but maintains the individual and household characteristics, as well as the six indices.

Table 6.6 Ordinary least square (OLS) regression on overall school and learning experiences without school type (pooled)

	(1) Pupil's Satisfaction	(2) Teaching & Learning	(3) Classroom Experience	(4) Pupil's Attitude	(5) Technology Use	(6) Learning Evaluation
Age	-0.138***	-0.162***	-0.105***	-0.00182	-0.0564**	-0.109***
	(0.0243)	(0.0244)	(0.0268)	(0.0255)	(0.0221)	(0.0235)
Male	-0.162*	-0.0760	-0.342***	-0.233**	-0.0266	-0.218**
	(0.0902)	(0.0905)	(0.0993)	(0.0942)	(0.0824)	(0.0873)
Educated dad	-0.469**	-0.475**	-0.493**	-0.184	-0.189	-0.188
	(0.202)	(0.202)	(0.229)	(0.215)	(0.186)	(0.195)
Educated mum	0.0987	0.277**	0.148	0.150	0.114	0.0594
	(0.135)	(0.134)	(0.150)	(0.140)	(0.123)	(0.130)
Muslim	0.201**	-0.0647	0.362***	0.257***	0.267***	0.129
	(0.0926)	(0.0930)	(0.102)	(0.0967)	(0.0845)	(0.0896)
Own radio	0.278**	0.208*	0.0798	0.122	0.216**	-0.0412
	(0.113)	(0.114)	(0.124)	(0.118)	(0.103)	(0.109)
Own TV	0.137	-0.104	0.205	0.218	0.0493	0.0722
	(0.202)	(0.204)	(0.230)	(0.210)	(0.190)	(0.196)
Work after sch	0.326***	0.639***	0.372***	0.0759	0.253***	0.261***
	(0.0905)	(0.0907)	(0.0999)	(0.0944)	(0.0827)	(0.0874)
Extra class	0.557***	0.854***	0.410***	0.187	0.786***	0.671***
	(0.138)	(0.140)	(0.151)	(0.145)	(0.127)	(0.135)
Constant	1.157**	1.290***	0.881*	-0.480	-0.352	0.842*
	(0.454)	(0.458)	(0.512)	(0.473)	(0.419)	(0.440)
Observations	738	727	713	734	731	744
R-squared	0.107	0.189	0.097	0.027	0.093	0.090

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 6.6 reports the results for all the surveyed children (pooled) on the determinants of schooling experiences outcomes without the school type dummy. The table examines whether key significance remains after conditioning children's individual and household

characteristics. It is important to note that almost all the variables have the expected signs in terms of being negative or positive as found in the school dummy model (Table 6.5). Other characteristics such as age, gender, and educated father had a significantly negative impact on schooling experiences, while mother's education, household asset status, religion, extra tuition, and after-school activities had a significantly positive impact on schooling experiences.

6.7 Conclusion

The second objective of this chapter was to explore the differences existing in government and private school children' school experiences and how these differences varied. Several broad conclusions could be drawn from these results.

- First, the schooling experiences of children who attended government and private schools varied.
- Second, the experience of children who attended private schools was not as positive as those who attended government schools, especially in areas such as quality of teaching and learning and overall schooling satisfaction.
- Third, children's individual and household background affected how they experienced the schooling process, irrespective of the type of school they attended.
- Fourth, older children, boys, and children whose fathers were educated had negative schooling experiences.
- Finally, children who were from Muslim households, worked after school, and had extra classes had some positive outcomes regarding how they experienced school.

It was expected that children from government schools would fare worse in how they experienced school, and that students from these schools would have negative schooling experiences (Dixon et al., 2017; Dixon et al., 2013). This was not the case. The multivariate analysis indicated a significantly positive association between government school attendance and overall schooling satisfaction (25.5%) as well as the teaching and learning process (49%). The association between government school attendance and positive teaching and learning experiences as well as positive overall schooling experiences found in this study does not support the argument that private schools in

inner-city communities are of better quality than their government counterparts, at least as far as the schooling experiences index is concerned.

This raises two important questions. First, how do participants explain this? Second, do these explanations and my observations support the quantitative results? Therefore, I was particularly interested in views that explained the significant differences found in the statistical model. The next section is structured around three categories: participants' perspectives on the quantitative results; my observations in the school and community environment which explain the quantitative results; and what I felt were the tensions, conflicts, and challenges associated with participants' explanations and my own observations. Throughout the analysis, attention is drawn to the emerging statistical results and how they align with participants' perspectives and my observations.

6.8 Explaining the schooling experiences of inner-city children: The views of participants

This section focuses on interviews with those responsible for children's schooling to provide deeper meanings and explanations of the statistical results. Therefore, three categories of stakeholders were interviewed: Head teachers and the circuit supervisor; parents; and the study area's assemblyman. The results of the interviews are discussed in terms of three overarching themes which emerged from the interviews: teaching and learning, the classroom context, and level of technology used.

6.8.1 Teaching and learning

Government school head teachers interviewed indicated that they provide better 'teaching and learning' experiences because of their professional and pedagogical knowledge. All four government school head teachers viewed these as reasons why government school children have better schooling experiences. These head teachers were all professionally trained and served as managers in their respective schools. As a result, they abided by the Ghanaian government's National Teachers' Standards. They argued that their training was rooted in approaches and theories of teaching and learning which encompassed practices such as group work and discussions but were unable to always spell out what these entailed.

However, the private school head teachers interviewed indicated that although most of their teachers were untrained, they had the capacity to offer a better student experience. They argued that they had in-service training that they perceived as equally relevant to

providing children with good learning experiences. They argued that there was a general perception that the private schools in the area offered better teaching and learning experience than their government counterparts. This also accords with the results of the statistical model (see Table 6.4) which indicates that there was no significant difference when the teaching and learning experiences were controlled for. Thus, the type of school children attended did not significantly affect their teaching and learning experiences. The observation data shows that teachers in both school types engaged in 'rote' learning – reading sentences for children to repeat after them.

Interviews with head teachers, the circuit supervisor, and parents showed that while private schools were blamed for having untrained teachers who lacked professional and pedagogical insight (and while proprietors were therefore accused of exploitation), some equally accused government school teachers of spending less class time with children and failing to teach while in school:

> Oh yes, with the private schools … if a teacher misbehaves, he'll be sacked …We don't have that powers to terminate someone's appointment or the power to withhold someone's salary (Voice:015, Circuit Officer).

Clearly, poor teaching and learning experiences could be an indication of a lack of commitment within the government school system occurring from a combination of absence of professional discipline among teachers, lack of effective supervision by the circuit supervisor, and the nature of inner-city living.

Just like the government school head teachers, some parents and the circuit supervisor indicated that private schools only focused on teaching to the test and failed to provide a holistic schooling experience for their students. They referred to private schools as using examination pass rates as a 'unique selling point' to successfully convince parents to register their children in private schools for profit-making purposes. Thus, unlike government schools, private ones appeared to function as businesses, so the proprietors supervised the teachers to ensure better use of their time. However, private schools had a higher rate of turnover of staff because of this.

> …supervision is key in private schools. I have established a school, and I need to excel to attract students. If I fail, I lose. So, I'll go heaven and earth to ensure I do well. So, whoever you employ, whether the person is a JHS, or SHS … you must work and work well without questions. They easily hire and fire (Voice 004, government schoolteacher).

It remained the view of some participants that effective supervision of both school management types was the right course of action to secure strong teaching and learning, teacher motivation, and needed improvements in children's schooling experiences:

> I attended government school throughout. The only difference I see is teacher motivation. You understand … teacher motivation. When it comes to content, I mean, knowledge of the subject matter, we have the professional teachers. With the private [schools], management has the authority to hire and fire, so everyone is on his/her toes. But here, a teacher will do something, you warn him once, twice, thrice, … with query, and next time … he/she knows somebody higher than you … but in the private schools, the management has the right to fire you, so there is no reluctances or fooling around. Supervision do really help. I've been in the unitary school before. In the unitary schools, they have their supervisors, apart from the ones that come from the GES. So, in about a term, you can have about two or three groups coming, and because of that, they're always on their toes. As compared with the government, which is once a quarter, understand? If supervision is intensified, it'll really help (006, government school head teacher).

Interview participants saw the lack of supervision in government schools as undermining children's schooling experiences and their right to education, and that this undermining was being done by people who they felt should have promoted such rights. Generally, schoolteachers and head teachers were aware of what they were expected to know and do in terms of attitude and conduct among other behaviours they were required to exhibit to enhance the teaching and learning experience. The difficulty was how they should play this role without a proper mechanism to ensure they adhered to these ideals. This raises questions about whether adequate resources are available to government schools and the education bureaucracy, and whether government school head teachers have the authority to fire teachers who breach their code of conduct and compromise children's schooling experiences. In contrast to those in the government schools, head teachers in the private schools were monitored daily, which seemed to force teachers to adhere to practices that enhanced children's schooling experiences. This was highlighted by a private school parent who commented:

> You compare the results of the private schools and the government ones; you realise that the private schools' performance is always better than the government schools. It tells you that, I think in the government schools, it's not about the quality of teaching because all the teachers in the government schools have quality training. … I'm sure the motivation is not enough or maybe the attitude many people have towards government work. They do not attach so much urgency,

> commitment, dedication and all those things to it (Voice: 025, private school dad).

However, government school head teachers interviewed spoke of their responsibilities in terms of providing a 'holistic' schooling experience for their students instead of just helping them to pass exams, as one government school head teacher pointed out when he said that 'private schools only prepare children for exams as government schools look at a "holistic" view of teaching' (002). Unlike private schools, government schools focused more on employing a variety of instructional strategies to enhance the teaching and learning experiences of children enrolled in them and were less likely to only focus on practices that would help children pass exams.

In general, the head teachers in both school systems did not refer to the actual strategies involved in the teaching and learning process itself, such as group work, individual activities, or role play in class. My view is that this is partly because trained teachers are supposed to automatically incorporate these strategies into their teaching, as prescribed by the guidelines in the National Teachers' Standards for Ghana. The aspiration of the guidelines is to provide holistic learning that provides children with critical thinking skills and pays attention to all learners, especially disadvantaged children, girls, and children with special needs. If, indeed, private and government school teachers are only teaching to the test as observed, it could be argued that there is a danger that children who attend these schools are being denied the development of important skills that will enable them to have freedom to be who they want to be in the future. The 2017 Chief Examiners' Report (WAEC, 2017) highlights major weaknesses and gaps in children's learning experiences which are likely to negatively impact on children's learning and skills. The examiners were concerned about issues around poor grasp of language, lack of vocabulary, poor comprehension of written passages, incorrect spelling, and lack of knowledge and learning skills. However, this is not aggregated around type of school. Nevertheless, Shulman (2013) suggests that teaching must be carried out by those who understand the content, process, and knowledge base of teaching, and argues that only those who know how to teach can positively enhance children's lives.

6.8.2 The classroom experience

How interviewees perceived children's schooling experiences in the classroom context was consistent with children's own views (see Table 6.4); that is, private school children were more likely to say they liked going to school. (Note the difference between the mean

and logit results). However, while at school, government school children were more likely to be happy in class. Responding to questions about why private school children were more likely to report that they liked going to school, it emerged that 'liking going to school' was conditional; if it was perceived that private schools were more valuable than government schools, and tuition fees paid for by parents, this encouraged a reciprocal action from teachers who made sure children attended school regularly:

> If you compare anything free or moderate, it's like it's not worth it (not worth attending government schools). That's why I put … For me, I don't think it's because some of us have money, which is why we choose to send our children to private schools. Sometimes, when the term ends or begins, and you must pay fees, it's not really easy. But then you want a better result. If you compare the government to the private, the private outweighs the government by miles (018, private school parent).

Private school parents appeared to have better links with the schools their children attended, in terms of communicating any behaviours that might have affected their children's school attendance:

> If any of the children misbehaves at home, I come to the school to report to the teachers to discipline them (024, private school parent).

> As for me, if my child is in a class, the teacher becomes a friend to me. I take their phone numbers and regularly call them [teachers] and ask about the children. I visit the school from time to time to ask about attendance and performance of my kids. If the child is doing well or being stubborn, I'll know. You see, sometimes kids, they have double lives. And if there is something I'm not happy about, I just go to the head teacher to discuss it with him. I don't wait till PTA meetings (018, private school parent).

One government school parent recounted how perceptions of private schools, mask how they really are, in terms of children going to school regularly and liking school:

> You go to the street to see the children walking there, most of them – especially from both government and private schools do not like going to school. They tell their parents they are going to school, but they don't (016, government school dad).

However, this seemed more the exception than the norm, as children walking in the streets is a complex phenomenon. It appeared that some of the children who walked the streets during schooling hours were new arrivals (new rural-urban migrants) who had not yet secured admission to the oversubscribed and limited places in government schools but could not afford private schooling. It was possible that such children would remain

unregistered until a vacancy became available. One government school parent commented:

> If you want to send your child to the local government schools, especially the one my children attend, … they have their own Kindergarten there. So, if your child finishes Kindergarten anywhere else, and wants to join … it's not easy. Sometimes, some people withdraw their children [due to moving away from the community]. In that case, you may have a chance to send your child there. The people are many and they can't admit all of them. Anytime there is a vacancy in class one, they register all the children and invite them in to sit for exams. So, if the child fails, you'll either let them repeat Kindergarten 2 so they can get the chance to automatically go to class one. (Voice: 016, government school dad).

Most of the private schools in the area were out of reach of the new migrants who moved into the area. The head teacher of the 'top' private school (parents, head teachers in both types of school, and the circuit supervisor agreed) in the area explained when asked what fees parents must pay for access:

> The founder of the school … he wants 'quality education for people in the lower income bracket', so he's trying to promote it. Presently, in Ghana, you can't go to any school [private school] and pay fees that covers books for the whole term. Our fees are relatively lower than the other [elite private schools]. We have three segments. Those in pre-school, they pay GHS 317 per term. That is the fee for the whole term. It looks more like a charity [when you compare it to the elite private schools]. Class one to three, thus the lower primary … they pay GHS 562 for the whole term. This is a school where we do not make any adverts. Unfortunately, we don't make any adverts at all. Results are what bring several children to the school (003, private school head teacher).

However, a paradoxical issue emerged. The head teacher was painting a picture of a school which on the one hand was affordable to low income earners and on the other suffered from non-payment of fees. If indeed private schooling was that affordable for all categories of households, including the very poor, why was there a significant issue of non-payment of school fees despite payment arrangements? When asked what happens if a parent is unable to pay the pre-arranged fees, the head teacher went on to reveal:

> Our system here gives room for people who cannot pay fees outright. Some pay weekly, some pay monthly, and therefore, it makes it easier for those in the low-income bracket to afford to pay. In fact, there are people unable to pay anything at the end of the term. I wanted to give you the list of people who have not paid any money at all. We've been asked to sack those people because they cannot come to school, and don't pay fees at all. At least, they must try. There is going to be a kind

> of audit to find out those in the system who owe fees but have not paid anything at all to either find a way around it or risk withdrawal. The parents are very much aware. …One of them came to pay fees and I even just sent him the receipt. He paid GHS 200, and his arrears are more than the term's fees. Meaning, last term, he did not finish payment. He is still here (003).

Many private school parents appeared to have struggled to pay their children's school fees, and therefore had their children withdrawn:

> At first, they [children] went to a private school, but we were unable to pay the school fees. They were chased out of class because of fee non-payment. I did not like that. When I had my last child, I was unable to work for about three months. The teachers kept sending the kids home to collect the fees which I didn't have. The children were eventually sacked. The children stayed at home for a very long time before places became available in the public school they now attend (014, government school parent who had her children withdrawn from private school).

Clearly, private school children are more likely to say they like going to school. Their mandate is to go to school to make the most out of the investment made on them, in terms of fees. Despite this, many get withdrawn due to non-payment of fees. It is also clear that there are households who struggle to afford their children's attendance in private schools, thus their children miss out on learning, making friends, and developing skills. Some children are intermittently enrolled but get withdrawn and are unable to secure placement in a government school which they could access for free. This clearly shows that private schools are 'plugging gaps' in schooling supply in many contexts, despite the fact that not every household can afford them (Akyeampong et al., 2007:75). This invariably might affect their rights to education, their future human capital needs, and their capability to have the freedom to be and do what they want. Despite this, Tooley (2013) calls for governments in developing countries to promote social justice by improving access to 'low-cost' private schools rather than focusing on the government sector, which has been instrumental in making children happy while in school.

Another possible reason that might explain the likelihood of government school children being happy at school relates to the fact that they do not have any fees burden on them. As one government school parent who had her children withdrawn from a private school due to fee non-payment exclaimed:

> I have no work. … now that my children are in school, they are very happy, 'wallai'! [swear word to emphasise how truthful the statement is]. These children like studying [but they were sacked from school].

> For example, the oldest boy studies after school, he won't sleep. When he comes back from school, he will have the books out and he'll be reading. He doesn't sleep. While everyone else is asleep, he'll be studying. My biggest problem now is having money to pay the children's fees [schooling expenses as fees in the government schools are free]. Right now, I haven't got money. If I have money, I will pay, but I haven't got any. Even to give them [three children] pocket money is very difficult. I haven't got it. I don't have anything ma, I'm idle. I have no work to do. (017).

This except from an interview with a government school parent highlights how government schools help the most disadvantaged to stay in school. In government schools, children are not sent home for fees, so at least pupils in government schools will consistently be able to attend school, which means they can have peace of mind to enjoy the teaching and learning process. The school that her children attended benefitted from the school feeding programme. So, while at school, her children had free food to eat, although their mother was poor. The head teacher of the school explained:

> We have school feeding for all of them [children]. The school feeding is such that, we have to give our enrolment number to the office [district office]. And then, based on the enrolment, they prepare the food accordingly. Majority of the school children are poor, that is why they are on the school feeding programme. … Every child who attends school will have food to eat, once a day in the school. Unless a child decides he/she doesn't like the food on offer. Then they can decide to have their own food, but this is highly unlikely. The school feeding programme came because the government wanted to make sure that every child at school-going age must be in school and thrive. There are a lot of problems in this community. They say, I don't have money to send my child to school. I don't even have food to eat, let alone sending my child to school. So, the government's capitation grants cater for some of the schooling expenses that they incur. And then, with the school feeding programme, the children will be given some food to eat once a day. So, the government tries to help [the most disadvantaged] to some extent (002, government school head teacher).

The government school feeding programme and capitation grants were viewed as justifiable actions of the state, as the body responsible for ensuring citizens' constitutional rights and addressing concerns regarding equitable access to schooling, and as realising some rights of the disadvantaged households. Although there were some challenges associated with realising the rights of government school children, there was a reassuring sense of optimism about the impact of the little support received from the government, as some interviewees pointed out:

> with the children, they are ready to learn, they come to school, and happy here. I don't think they have a problem here. Even you yourself can see, because you've been with us here for a very long time. They get the minimum necessity that will help them learn from our end. Some of them, you see their uniforms … the appearances, their shoes … Once a while, the government will supply a bit. … And we buy some to support the kids, especially, at the JHS level. And then, the teachers, they're doing their best. I try to encourage them about what their role is. We are doing our best. We don't receive fees, but we ask for PTA levy, something small to help the running of the school. For the whole term, we charge GHS 20. We advise them that they shouldn't wait till the end of term, they can pay by instalments. But we still have parents waiting till the end of term when the children are going to write exams. I've advised the teachers that it's not the children's fault. So, no child is sacked for non-payment (006, government school head teacher).

> I was the best teacher of the whole Greater Accra. I'm not bragging. I think about these kids. It's like I live with these kids. Every school I teach in, if I leave, I leave with the kids. The parents take the children out and bring them to wherever I go. When I came here, I had only one stream, now I have double streams. And I still have students coming, although there are no places. Initially, parents preferred the Madrassa to the circular schooling. They were with the view that if the child opts for the circular one, somewhere along the line, they'll abandon the Islamic faith. But now, they see the importance of education. Everyone now wants their child to complete at least the basic. But when they get to the SHS it becomes difficult and most of the girls getting married as a result. But we do our best to ensure they stay in school (002, government school head teacher).

However, despite the government schoolteachers' higher overall efforts to keep children relatively happier, a private school parent who was also a teacher in a government school indicated that this happiness masked an underlying lack of 'discipline', 'misconduct', and 'notoriety':

> for your child not to stay at home, you may as well send them to the public school. … Dump them there. … I think that some of the measures and the policies that are coming out, especially, those ones about the rights and freedom of a child. Things like that have given the children [government school children] so much leverage to 'misconduct' themselves. To what extent can you take an action? I went to a public school and the time; you couldn't even talk to your seniors anyhow because the senior will 'discipline' you. But today, if a teacher takes a cane to discipline a child [in the government schools], you'll be praying that the mother doesn't come to the house to question you why the child was disciplined. So, if you put all these together, you see why the public schools are now getting so much 'notoriety'. Children in the public schools are now so disrespectful. … And sometimes the teachers look at them … you discipline a child the mother will just come to the

> school. She won't ask why he was disciplined. She'll just come and attack you (025).

This comment highlights the arbitrary punishments meted out to private school children in the community which clearly affected the level of happiness of children attending private schools. Alhassan and Adzahlie-Mensah (2010) point out that even though children are to be corrected for wrongdoing, promoting arbitrary punishment in schools can gradually lead to irregular attendance or slow progress that leads to dropouts. Therefore, this might serve as a route to illiteracy where such children who drop out are not able to read all or part of a sentence, contributing to the education crisis (UNESCO, 2014).

6.8.3 Level of technology use

The FCUBE policy tends to assume that the government will provide textbooks, exercise books, and learning equipment to government school children, thereby in a sense reducing the cost burden of parents who send their children to government schools. This notwithstanding, the quantitative data suggest that private school children were more likely to say they have access to textbooks and library books than their peers in government schools. This raises an important question as to why this was the case, given that government school children should have an adequate supply of textbooks. Analysis of interviews with head teachers shows that there was a hidden reality in practice when it came to the implementation of the policy. While some interviewees blamed the government for not delivering the school supplies on time, others revealed constraints associated with parents' inability to buy their children the needed exercise books:

> The government has been providing exercise books for some time now, roughly, …basically, I can say, two years ago when I came to this place, we were provided with exercise books but last year and this year, we have not received any. So, the children have been buying the exercise books themselves (002, government school head teacher).

> Once in a while, the government will supply a bit. And if they do, they give them in the third term. So, every first term, we call the parents and make them aware at the PTA meeting and give them about two weeks to supply their children with exercise books. Yet, they still wouldn't have (006, government school head teacher).

Clearly, insufficient textbook provision was hindering effective teaching and learning processes, irrespective of the irregular supply of exercise books, and other schooling technology in government schools. This could be an indication of lack of resources within the government school system generally, arising from a combination of frustration on the

part of teachers and disillusionment on the part of parents. However, whatever the reason behind the lack of schooling supplies from the government, the reality was that it affected the teaching and learning process, and caused friction between head teachers and parents:

> At the beginning of term, a parent came to ask why her children have not received exercise books. [This is because] she heard on the radio that free exercise books have been supplied. I asked, my friend, did you see the car that supplied the books, and offloaded them? Then she said no, I heard it on the radio. I said, I beg you, I'll not risk my job for exercise books. If they should bring any exercise books for me to distribute. When they bring them, they tell us the number of books we should give to each child. We account for it and report back. We buy notebooks for our teachers. When you tell them this, they think, no, it's a lie. The problem is that it will be announced on radio that parents need not pay anything because education is free (002, government school head teacher).

This government school head teacher also expressed the view that parents should be accountable for the children they bring to the world by providing for all their needs, including schooling supplies:

> Normally, you know, they [government] have their budget, and they look at the priority areas. So, looking at the amount they have at a point in time, they try to satisfy those areas first. So, if there is any money left, they can also look at other areas. If there are no monies in the coffers, they may decide on what they will spend the money on. The government did not ask parents to have the number of children they decided to have. Once someone gets married, they should know that they will have children. And once you have children, you must be responsible for them (002, government school head teacher).

Unlike government school children, private school children did not benefit at all from free supplies of textbooks and exercise books. Parents had to pay tuition fees and buy all the needed supplies for their children. What appeared to influence the likelihood of private school children having more access to textbooks and exercise books were in-school arrangements. The fees paid by private school parents were inclusive of books and other key materials. All the children were given these essential items whether or not they had fully settled their fees:

> Presently, in Ghana, you can't go to any school and pay fees that covers books for the whole term (003, private school head teacher).

The assumption that government schools will automatically provide school supplies, including technology, for free to government school children disregards funding constraints and logistical issues in a rapidly changing and uncertain education system

(UNESCO, 2014). Delays in receiving supplies and lack of commitment on the part of the government are both distinguishing features of the government school system. In this context, this is likely to affect the outcomes of families who look up to the government as the provider of opportunities, rather than relying on the private sector as customers.

The student survey results suggest that government school children were more likely to receive advice on their personal and academic problems. This had to do with some government school head teachers' belief that their role encompassed more than being head and manager of a school. It appears that they deeply cared about the children's welfare. This meant they constantly talked to them about their development and perceived them more as public assets who could contribute to national development, in contrast to private school children, with their self-interested ambitions. Generally, the government sector recognised the need to advise children and their parents on the benefits of education and challenge parents to do their best to keep children at school, particularly parents with a very low or no educational background:

> I think it is the educational background some of them are coming from. Some, without good educational background seem not to know the essence of maybe putting and spending so much in the education [of their children]. They rather would have the child at home to sell stuff and run errands. One time, we had to intervene in a case where a family wanted to give a class six child out for marriage. We asked the family that, do you know what kind of person your child will turn into after her [education]? Now we have women MPs, Presidents, and some occupying key positions. Do you know your girl is not a bad girl? She is not bad educationally, and you want to force her into marriage. If you want her to marry, at least, let her finish her education. She will have some skills. If she is to depend solely on the man, and the man is not educationally sound, then the child will suffer (015, circuit supervisor).

Another differing set of distinctions arising from providing advice on personal and academic issues related to the differing policy objectives of the two types of school. In the government schools, there appeared to be policies promoting social equality, creating opportunities for respected individuals to convey difficult messages to parents. There was a concern that, unless special and deliberate efforts were made, education might not benefit most of those whose parents already had disadvantages and would thus draw further away from the relatively richer members of the community. PTAs appeared to be the main means by which such parents could be advised strategically:

> If you have a good PTA executive, who happen to be members of the community, they speak [advice on teachers' behalf] and they [other

> parents] understand. Particularly, when they're enlightened. We are so fortunate to have such parents. So, if we organise PTA meetings, we don't talk. They talk. So, if it is a lie, they convey the lie, they talk. … You understand? It doesn't come from us. They are educated, they are familiar with the terrain. (002, government school head teacher).

Therefore, the issue of strategies and policies available to government schools due to their position as the provider of social justice and fairness was crucial to households' access to useful personal and academic advice. This was constructive advice that determined whether children from disadvantaged households would be motivated to access schooling and proceed to post-secondary education and achieve their schooling aspirations. Having chosen a private school for their children and paying for it, private school households are more likely to be motivated with or without school PTAs, while government schools thrive on the advice of teachers and PTAs to secure strong, useful advice and motivation.

6.9 Observations of the 'black box' of the classrooms of government and private schools

While the depth and details of the interview data was revealing, the observation data provided a deeper understanding of the similarities and differences between private and government schools in the study community. Understanding these differences is an important step towards discovering the difference between what children say their schooling experiences are, how interview participants view children's schooling experiences, and what happens in real classroom and school contexts. I view the classroom as the place where the actual learning takes place. Therefore, I wanted to have a first-hand encounter with children's schooling experiences in addition to the second-hand accounts of classroom experiences obtained from the survey data and the interviews. Observing the natural occurrence of the classroom context allowed to understand what typically goes on in government and private school classrooms. I also paid attention to what was not happening in the light of what can prevent children from being capable and free to be what they really want to be. My observations focused on teaching, learning, and classroom interactions, as well as assessments.

6.9.1 Description of the classroom environments: Teaching, learning, and classroom interactions

The aim of conducting classroom observations was to observe first-hand what was going on in the classroom context rather than making assumptions. I knew that the children were being educated in their various classrooms, but I wanted to suspend this assumption and

see for myself what happened in this ‘black box’ where teachers teach and children learn, rather than accepting conventional assumptions. My first impression of both government and private school students was that they were ready to learn. As I entered government classrooms, there were patchy decorations on the walls, which made the walls look bare. Students’ desks were arranged with five or six children per bench, making movement very restrictive. The average number of children in each classroom was 55. There was a small space at the front of the classroom with limited room for the teachers’ desk and chair. Private school classrooms observed were of similar descriptions, except the classroom walls were more welcoming, with bright colours and inviting decorations. There was one private school that had a maximum of 19 children in a class. This was due to the ‘children leaving to join other private schools, being withdrawn for fees non-payment or leaving to join a government school when a place become available’ (002, proprietor of school).

6.9.2 Characteristics of the teachers and observed activities

I observed classes in 12 government and 12 private schools (one class in each school). Each class was observed three times, making 48 observations for each school management type. Among the government schoolteachers, there were only two who were untrained. All except one private school teacher were trained. See appendix 5 for the observation schedule.

Class time was spent on phonics, drawing, and reading lessons in the lower primary classes. In the upper classes – class 6 and JHS 3 – reading, comprehension, social studies, and integrated science were observed.

6.9.3 The teaching and learning process

In government schools, teachers encouraged student participation by employing a variety of instructional strategies. Teachers typically used a whole-class dialogue as an instructional strategy to encourage reading. For example, in a class 6 reading lesson, children engaged in chorus reading where they repeated after the teacher. This promoted collaborative learning. It appeared to provide learning opportunities that had particular advantages. The children appeared stimulated by repeating after their teachers, and by having the opportunity to pronounce difficult words together, which weaker children might have had problems pronouncing. However, this prevented the children with differing personal abilities from making interactive exchanges with their peers and teacher. Having the opportunity to interact with peers might help to broaden and deepen

children's individual understanding of words and sentence structures. Moreover, this experience could potentially prevent the facilitation of children's individual social and personal development, especially for slow learners. Despite these, it appeared children were not learning.

For example, during reading lessons in a government school (class 6 A, Tuesday 08:40-09:40), the teacher wrote the key words on the board and asked the children to repeat after her. Afterwards, she read the passage line by line for children to repeat after her. Turning to my left, I asked a few children where they were in the passage, as they repeated the words after the teacher. It was evident that they were not looking in their books as they were unable to point out exactly where the rest of the group were in the passage. They repeated after their teacher without paying due attention to the passages. Although their teacher wrote keywords on the board and took time to explain the words to the children, these children were unable to interact with their colleagues as much as was possibly necessary, as teachers found it difficult to engage with individual children during the one-hour double reading lesson. The large class sizes meant that teachers were unable to observe children's in-class work. There was one exception to this, however. In one of the government schools, despite the overcrowding, a teacher (class one trained government schoolteacher) arranged the children in groups of five in a shoe horn style. In each group, she had a child whom she had defined as an 'all-rounder' as head of the group. This encouraged peer support where children interacted with each other, but clearly, most of the children did not appear to be learning.

6.9.4 Time use in the classroom

Additionally, teachers used a third of the time writing on the blackboard, with the children copying down what was on the blackboard during and after the end of lessons. There was no access to ICT equipment in the classrooms. Most children were active in class, but asking questions in class was minimal, as teachers were rather the ones who asked questions to make sure children understood the concepts and what teachers were teaching in general. Teachers frequently said, 'am I clear'? to which children responded, 'yes sir/madam'. This clearly showed poor teaching as all the children gave chorus responses.

Private school children had similar experiences, except that the majority of their time was spent completing exercises in class. Unlike government school children, who had fewer opportunities to complete exercises in class, private school children completed written exercises at the end of each lesson. This meant that a greater chunk of the lesson time was

allocated to class exercises and marking. This led me to believe that class exercises were given a priority over explaining concepts or spending time to demonstrate meanings of concepts. Therefore, the focus of teaching in the private school classrooms was on maximising children's chances of achieving observable achievements (their scores on the end-of-lesson exercises). Conversely, in government schools, the focus was generally on helping individual children understand what was being taught. These differential aims shaped how children were disciplined during lessons.

6.9.5 Teacher knowledge and pedagogical practice

Private school children who scored lower marks or were found talking in class were caned. Caning predominantly occurred in the lower classes (KG 1-class 6), and more frequently, as a teaching strategy to instil discipline, in private schools than in government schools.

Observably, the reasons why children were caned differed between government and private schools. While private school teachers frequently canned children for low marks and to instil discipline, government schoolteachers generally only threatened children with the cane as a classroom management strategy. For example, in a private school classroom, I observed a schoolteacher actively caning children in an art lesson (Class 3). The reason behind her action was related to the children's inability to understand what she was trying to teach.

The teacher started her lesson by writing 'feelings, pictures, and seeing' on the board. She then asked the children to say these words after her. After this, the teacher asked the children to draw a durbar scene. The children began to scream at this, questioning what a durbar was. The teacher reacted to this by caning all the children with a stick to keep them focused. My reflection on this was that the children simply did not understand what a durbar was. The teacher did not help the children activate their prior knowledge by checking for background knowledge and what the children already knew, and then helping them to make connections, either between prior drawings or by showing a picture of a durbar drawing to the children. The children did not have the opportunity to ask questions, but their reaction clearly showed that they did not understand what was required of them.

During an art lesson run by a government schoolteacher (trained), I observed something very different. As she began her lessons, she wrote 'snail' on the backboard. She

pronounced the word and asked the children to repeat after her. Prior to asking the children to draw the snail, she asked them (class 3 children) where snails were found, and the importance of snails to the individual and the eco-system. After the discussion, the teacher asked the children to place snail shells which they had in their bags on their tables.

She then told the children that, 'we are going to draw the snail'. She began by drawing the snail in stages on the board and asked the children to replicate it in their books. Throughout the lesson, this teacher went around the overcrowded room to observe and to support children who raised their hands for help. This kind of approach seemed to prepare the children to draw the object, asked them questions, and allowed them to ask for help when needed. My observation is that government school children had greater opportunity to learn as their teachers effectively used professional practices to organise and manage the classroom as an efficient learning environment. Government schoolteachers typically introduced their topics and explain what they were expected to achieve. However, some government schoolteachers focused their attention on other things apart from teaching. For example, one government schoolteacher and I walked into a class where both the teachers were asleep at their desks.

6.9.6 Teachers' time on tasks and monitoring

While most government schoolteachers were idle in most of their lessons (checking their phones) I observed that private school teachers who were mostly untrained spent more classroom time with their children in the classroom context. In the private schools, the proprietors and/or head teachers went around the various classroom to see how children were engaged. This compelled private school teachers to remain busy in the class and spend more time with the children. In the government schools visited, most teachers were in the classroom but were engaged in other activities, including checking their mobile phones, replying to text messages, or returning calls. Most teachers behaved relatively well when I was observing their class. however. In one government school, the head teacher and I went to a class (class 4) to check if the children's exercises had been marked. This class was among the biggest and was managed by two teachers. Both teachers were trained. They were sitting at opposites ends of the classroom. Upon entering the classroom after the first break (10:20), we found both teachers asleep at their desks. The head teacher and I stood there for about three minutes, but they were oblivious to the fact we were there. They were fast asleep when the children were supposed to be having double science lessons. The children were disorganised and talking but this did not wake the teachers up.

The head teacher then shouted ‘hey, are you all asleep, how come you are not teaching?’, to which they were unable to reply.

6.9.7 Teaching materials

It was obvious that both government and private school teachers predominantly used the chalkboard during the teaching and learning process. The children generally used textbooks, completing exercises set in the textbooks. In one government school, many children were idle during the time when they should have been writing. They had no exercise books. Exercise books were supposed to be supplied free of charge to government school children. However, supplies for that year had not yet arrived so children had to buy their own exercise books. Those who were unable to buy their own exercise books had no opportunity to complete the work set by their teachers. However, in private schools, children had all the basic materials for learning. Children had access to exercise books and were engaged during writing times. It was apparent that private school parents were forced to buy all school supplies at the beginning of the term, even before school fees were paid. This strategy provided private school children with the opportunity to participate in classroom activities. Additionally, government and private school children used similar textbooks, prescribed for the basic education level. Children in both school management types seldom had access to other instructional materials such as maps, globes, and photos.

6.9.8 Breaktime activities

I also observed the breaktime activities of children to understand the differential experiences between government and private schools. Management of breaktime or playtime activities is considered as important as classroom activities (Government of Ghana, 2004). There were two breaktime periods in the school timetable. The timetables for government and private schools were similar. They both had two 30-minutes break in a day. The first break started at 09:40 and ended at 10:10. The second break started at 12:25 and ended at 12:55. Government schools in deprived communities such as the one studied are supposed to benefit from a ‘school feeding programme’ in which children are fed once a day during school hours. However, only one school benefitted from this scheme. A few government school children arrived at school without food. Such children typically went to the markets to check if their parents had made any sales, the money from which they could use to buy food. Some of the children did not join the class afterwards. I followed three children on different occasions to the market to understand this

phenomenon. Invariably, the children either stayed at the market to help parents with sales or came back to school late and ended up missing valuable lessons. The arrangements in the private schools were different. Parents were normally asked to pay for school lunch in advance or on the day. The schools cooked and served lunch for the children on the school premises. Children were not allowed to go outside the school premises to purchase food. Therefore, they had the chance to go back to their classrooms in time to resume their lessons. This provided these children with the chance to focus on their studies and not lose class time.

An important aspect of breaktime was the children's use of the toilet facilities. Three out of the four government schools observed had adequate facilities. The fourth one had no toilet facilities. Children had no choice but to go to their own homes or neighbouring houses for such facilities. As a result of this, children from this school were always seen loitering about in the community. Some of the children used this as an excuse to truant; they reported they were coming to school but only stayed there till the first break and never came back. The private schools studied had access to toilet facilities, but they were not extensive enough, so children tended to queue and missed out on playtime and/or lunch. However, one private school had only one toilet for both boys and girls. Inadequate toilet facilities in schools affect children's studies, as they could develop sanitation-linked illnesses such as diarrhoea, hepatitis A, and typhoid, which are particularly dangerous for children (Rigby, 2018http://www.telegraph.co.uk/). Repeated bouts of such illnesses might increase children's chances of being malnourished and stunted, drastically affecting their school attendance and schooling aspirations.

6.9.9 Evaluation of the learning process

In addition to the actual teaching and learning experiences, differences in ways children's learning was evaluated were observed throughout this study. Based on observations, it was evident that children in both school management types engaged in a variety of assessment practices that were integrated in their learning. Children in both school management types tended to have multiple choice type questions, which appeared to encourage rote and superficial learning. For private schools particularly, there was an emphasis on quantity of assessment and frequent presentation of work. This served as evidence to the head teachers and/or proprietors that learning was taking place in the classroom. Private school children appeared to receive instant rewards which gave them a sense of achievement based on how well they had performed. However, children who

scored below a certain mark were caned. Nevertheless, grading functions in both school management types were overemphasised at the expense of the giving of useful advice and learning functions. This approach appeared to have encouraged a phenomenon where children compared themselves with one another, the primary purpose of which seemed to me to be competition rather than skill acquisition. For example, children who scored higher marks were clapped for, while children with lower marks were told to 'pull their weight next time' (Class six teacher).

The sheer number of children in the classrooms meant teachers in both school management types had very little chance to do something about it. Children's feedback was invariably about comparisons with other pupils but not about the particular qualities of their work, especially in private schools. However, not all the above descriptions applied to all classroom settings. There was one teacher – the class 3 teacher mentioned above – who provided a unique teaching experience to the children she taught. Nevertheless, these general conclusions have been drawn based on my observations. The Education for All Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2014) points out that there exists a learning crisis where many disadvantaged children are not achieving the basic age-appropriate literacy and numeracy competence required to progress to secondary school. It goes on to stress that many children are 'unable to read or understand a simple sentence' (UNESCO, 2014:191). Therefore, children in both school management types face a real danger of losing out on useful skills which are crucial to their development and long-term potential.

6.10 Summary

Children's schooling experiences have been missing from discussions of low-fee private schooling assessing relative quality in developing countries (Srivastava, 2013). In this chapter I have examined the schooling experiences of government and private school children by first exploring the factors correlated with children's schooling experiences in urban Accra. I used qualitative evidence to shed further light on the emerging factors which provided deeper meaning.

The model shows that certain schooling experiences are indicators of the likelihood of attending a certain type of school. In the inner-city area of Accra, the better a child was in composition writing and oral presentation, and the more they liked going to school and had adequate textbooks and library books, the more likely they were to attend a private

school. Conversely, the more a child received adequate advice on personal and academic issues, had adequate learning equipment, and was happy in class, the more likely they were to attend government school.

There is a huge international literature that argues that private schools are not any better than government schools when learning outcomes were compared (Verger et al., 2016; Klees, 2018; Akaguri, 2011b). The evidence reported in this chapter uses schooling experiences, and shows that private school children do not consistently have better schooling experiences than their government school counterparts based on the variables considered However, the statistical results do not explain why these indicators differ for government and private schools.

The qualitative evidence showed that there were practices within each school type that might explain children's schooling experiences. For example, most government schoolteachers were mostly trained and offered what appeared to be sound pedagogically based experiences for children as a result. Additionally, government schoolteachers paid equal attention to teaching and assessment. However, these teachers also spent less class time teaching. This was due to the poor supervision practices in the government school system, but undoubtedly had serious consequences on children's schooling experiences and their right to education. Conversely, while private school teachers were generally not trained and lacked basic professional knowledge, their teaching was better-supervised, and they therefore used their time more efficiently. Solving the education crisis requires good trained teachers who are ready and committed to teach with minimum supervision. Evidence in this section proves otherwise.

In addition, private school teachers were observed frequently giving children homework and exercises to do. However, schooling is not just about achievements and quality as defined by examination results. It is also about children having good experiences in the school and classroom contexts. Nevertheless, private schools had very strict disciplinary regimes that included physical punishment and abuse meted out to students who failed to do well in these exams. This constitutes a violation of their rights as human beings. This has been abolished and does not happen in government schools, however. Giving out arbitrary punishments to children has serious negative effects on children's happiness and school attendance (Alhassan and Adzhalie-Mensah, 2010).

As they do not pay fees, government school children were not kicked out of school for non-payment of fees and did not have to worry about paying them, so they had more continuity in their education as well as peace of mind to allow them to focus on their learning. As the evidence shows, private school owners did not take kindly to children who owed fees, especially during examination times. Unlike government school children, private school children who owed fees were invariably sent home until they paid their fees. This served as a source of unhappiness and shame for private school children who fell into this category of students and could therefore lead to them dropping out of school.

Finally, the evidence revealed a hidden reality when it came to the supply of textbooks and exercise books in the government schools. It is assumed that the government supplies all the needed resources to schools, and that there are therefore no cost burdens in this regard. The reality is that these resources never get supplied on time, if at all. However, private school children are forced to buy all the needed school supplies at the start of every term to ensure that they have the necessary tools for their studies.

The evidence has shown that the perception of private schools being better than government schools is not borne out by the evidence, at least when children's schooling experiences were compared. Therefore, the section argues that there is no good or bad dichotomy as there are positive and negative experiences in both school management types.

This section is unique in that it has considered relative experiences which inform schooling choice and school quality. Although the literature makes comparisons between government and private schools with regards to input and achievements (Akaguri, 2011a,b), this research is unique as it considers the differential experiences of children in government and private schools and contributes to the private/government school debate.

Regarding policy implications, policies should be designed to ensure that government schools learn to implement all the positive practices of private schools to enhance children's learning experiences and to encourage private schools to eradicate their own negative practices.

The next chapter considers the relationships between school type, children's background, and schooling aspirations.

Chapter 7: What are the relationships between type of school management and children's individual and household characteristics?

7.1 Introduction

Children's schooling aspirations, defined in terms of their chosen future occupation, the reasons behind this choice, and the barriers associated with achieving these aspirations, are the focus of this chapter. Particularly, it explores the main aspirations and the sources of such aspirations as expressed by children and their parents through the lens of human capital theory. Human capital theory principally assumes that education decisions are primarily an economic choice which compares the sum of future incomes resulting from education with the cost of education with regards to fees and foregone earnings (Schultz, 1961). In this sense, disadvantaged households invest in education with the hope that this investment might result in better occupational and economic outcomes (Archer et al., 2014). Some researchers have suggested that low-fee private schools offer better and higher returns to education than government alternatives (Dixon et al., 2017; Tooley et al.; 2007a; Tooley, 2005a). However, recent research into human capital formation in Ghana indicates that a significant number of poor children at the basic school level lack the basic support and cognitive development fundamental to the flourishing of human capital and capability and improved economic prospects (Rolleston, 2009; Rolleston and Oketch, 2008). This chapter also explores the extent to which potential barriers to schooling access interact with children's aspirations. It also compares the aspirations of private and government school children and their parents to determine the variations that exist.

This chapter examines the schooling aspirations of private and government school children by addressing three main questions. First, do private school children have higher aspirations than their government school counterparts given that private schools are perceived to provide higher quality schooling? Second, what reasons are associated with their future carrier choices, what are the strategies households and their children adopt to stay on top of attaining their future aspirations, and what support are children getting through education to achieve their aspirations. Finally, are there any barriers that might prevent inner-city households from achieving their schooling aspirations?

The analysis begins by testing the hypothesis that children's schooling aspirations are not affected by their household background and the type of school they attend. If so, then there will not be any constraints associated with realising their aspirations. This is followed by further insights into how parents explain their children's schooling aspirations. Data derived from survey children from four private and four government schools are used to compare the characteristics of aspirations of children enrolled in the two school management types. They include their desired future occupation, the reasons behind their chosen occupation, what they need to do now to realise these aspirations, what help they think they need in their schooling, and the anticipated barriers they might face as they go through schooling. The statistical approach employed in this section involves statistical difference in means testing. The statistical approach – difference in means – requires the development of aspirations and educational indicators, derived from items in the child survey questionnaires alongside a range of variables. This is followed by an analysis of qualitative data derived from interview participants. Finally, a summary that pulls together the emerging issues from the analysis are presented before concluding. This chapter argues that children from both schooling management types considered education as instrumental, rational, and utility-maximising. While these notions were strongly held, they were linked to poverty and a combination of factors which interacted to constrain their educational aspirations. Poverty is found to be the most limiting factor on inner-city children's aspirations irrespective of their school management type. However, it appears that government schools provide more inspiration for developing children's aspirations.

7.2 What are the factors that affect private and government school children's aspirations?

I grouped children's schooling aspirations (see survey instrument in Appendix 1) into one of seven mutually exclusive types of occupations that students aspired to, as defined by their aspired-to occupational careers after school. They are doctor, lawyer, soldier, nurse, trader, farmer, and other professions. Table 7.1 presents the statistical difference test used to compare the list of aspired-to occupations between private and government school children. The table also examines why the children aspired to their particular chosen occupations, and whether there are variations between private and government schools. Parental support needed at this stage of their education is also examined. Table 7.1 also compares the potential constraints on achieving their future career goals. Table 7.1 lists

the mean differences, which are compared using statistical difference testing. The results are presented by comparing the 'mean' differences between private and government school children's chances of exercising their schooling rights.

Table 7.1 Statistical difference test of children's chosen future occupation by school type

	Gov	Private	Difference
Variables	mean	mean	t-test
Aspired-to Occupation:			
Doctor	0.212	0.289	-0.077**
Lawyer	0.031	0.071	-0.040**
Soldier	0.133	0.075	0.058**
Nurse	0.113	0.094	0.019
Other professions	0.49	0.47	0.02
Trader	0.01	0.00	0.010*
Farmer	0.004	0.00	0.004
Occupation Reason:			
Earn income	0.035	0.034	0.001
Help parent	0.156	0.075	0.080***
Help nation	0.542	0.57	-0.028
Gain respect	0.171	0.117	0.054*
Other	0.097	0.2	-0.103***
Occupation Benefit:			
Help parents	0.172	0.159	0.013
Help community	0.278	0.198	0.080**
Own living	0.184	0.209	-0.026
Gain respect	0.228	0.298	-0.070**
Other	0.134	0.136	-0.002
Strategy to achieve occupation:			
Pass exam	0.782	0.786	-0.004
School attendance	0.062	0.044	0.018
Higher education	0.035	0.044	-0.01
Other	0.093	0.125	-0.032
Present support:			
Books	0.411	0.306	0.105***

Fees	0.226	0.221	0.005
Lunch	0.012	0.011	0.001
Teaching materials	0.278	0.284	-0.006
Other	0.05	0.089	-0.039**
Support needed now:			
Books	0.183	0.196	-0.013
Fees	0.216	0.122	0.094***
Lunch	0.025	0.004	0.021**
Teaching materials	0.28	0.236	0.044
Other	0.16	0.118	0.042
Future support needed:			
Books	0.056	0.048	0.008
Fees	0.102	0.074	0.028
Lunch	0.029	0.007	0.022**
Teaching materials	0.33	0.17	0.160***
Other	0.241	0.21	0.03
Barriers to occupational goals:			
Poverty	0.3620	0.2250	0.137***
Not studying	0.2680	0.2520	0.016
Lack of opportunity	0.0160	0.0890	-0.073***
Peer pressure	0.2290	0.2170	0.012
Other	0.1260	0.2170	-0.091***
Samples	**482**	**271**	

Note: Significance levels - *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p <0.1

The results show that children from both school management types had high schooling aspirations, as defined by their chosen future occupational career. However, there were several responses that clearly distinguished children attending private schools from their peers in government schools when it came to the type of occupation they aspired to. Private school children were more likely to aspire to become medical doctors (30% compared with 21%) and were more than twice as likely to aspire to a career as a lawyer (7% compared to 3%), relative to their peers in government schools. Conversely, government school children were more likely to aspire to a career as a soldier (13% compared to 7%), and only slightly more likely than private school children to aspire to a career in market trading (0.1% compared to 0%). However, there were a few instances

where the responses clearly showed no significant difference. These included: nursing (11% government compared to 9% private), other professions (49% government compared to 47% private), and farmer (.004% government compared to 0% private). Evidence on schooling effects in developing countries show that education functions as a foundation to other capabilities (Hoffman, 2007:2).

Table 7.1 goes on to present the motivations behind private and government school children's occupational choices. These are defined here in terms of 'reasons' behind the children's career choices for the two school management types, and the 'benefits' they thought they would reap once they finished school and were in their aspired occupations. Government school children were more than twice as likely to cite helping their parents (16% government compared to 8% private), gaining respect (17% government compared to 12% private), and other (12% government compared to 2% private) as reasons why they opted for their chosen careers. However, more than half of the children surveyed cited helping their nation as the reason behind their career choice (57% private, 54% government). In respect of the benefits of education, government school children were more likely than their private peers to cite helping their community as the benefit they thought they would receive when they finished school (28% compared to 20%), but private school children were more likely to be motivated by gaining respect (30% compared to 22%). There was no significant difference in the percentage of government and private school children who reported helping their parents (17% government, 16% private) and earning a living (21% private, 18% government) to be their motivation. The results for children enrolled in private schools when compared with their government school counterparts reveal an interesting finding. Contrary to the popular understanding of education serving exclusively economic and human capital purposes (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961), the children from both school management types recognised that there is more to education than personal economic benefits. The results highlighted an intrinsic importance of education (gaining respect), as well as collective instrumental social roles of education (Biesta, 2009): helping the community and the nation.

The survey questionnaire further explored whether the children in the two school management types had any plans for how to achieve their future career goals. This was defined as 'strategy'. A high percentage of private and government school children reported that they needed to pass their exams before they could achieve their career goals (79% private, 78% government). The other responses followed the same pattern where

private and government school children had similar responses. These included: school attendance (6% government, 4% private), obtaining higher education (4.4% private, 4% government), and other (12% private, 9% government). What is clear from these results is that, when it came to schooling, private and government school children alike had key strategies which they thought would help them stay on course for their future career aspirations. It appears that passing exams was the key strategy that children in both school management types felt might help them progress to the next level of their education and achieve their educational goals.

The support children get for their schooling is significant for achieving their future education goals. Therefore, this study also examined the level of support that children in in both school management types felt they needed. These were defined as current support, support needed from their parents in the near future, and support needed from others rather than their own parents. It is clear from Table 7.1 that there were several indicators that clearly showed that the children attending government and private school felt they were receiving similar levels of current support. These included fees (23% government, 22% private) – this similarity is not surprising as Akyeampong and Rolleston (2013) argue that there are hidden costs in government schools that are prohibitive for the most disadvantaged and the poorest – lunch (1.2% government, 1.1% private), and teaching materials (28.4% private, 28% government). However, government school children received significantly more support regarding books than their private peers (41% compared to 31%), representing a 10% difference.

In respect of the areas in which children are getting support at the time of the survey, again, there were similarities between government and private schools. These included books (20% private, 18% government) and teaching materials (26% government, 24% private). However, there were other indicators that clearly disguised government schools from their private counterparts. Government school children were nearly twice as likely as private school children to report they now needed support for fees (22% government compared to 12% private), and three times as likely to need present support for lunch (3% government compared to .004% private).

Support needed by children in both school management types in the future was largely similar. This was the case for books (6% government, 5% private), fees (10% government, 7% private), and other needs (24% government, 21% private). However, there were significant differences in support needed for lunch in the future (3%

government compared to 0.07% private) and teaching materials required in the future (33% government compared to 17% private). This shows that government school children anticipated a reduction in government provision around teaching materials (33%) in the future as compared with the current provision (26%), while private school children had hopes that they might not require as much support regarding teaching materials (24% currently, and 17% in the future).

The study further examined possible barriers to children's aspirations, defined here as 'barriers to occupational goals. The government and private school children surveyed gave similar responses on some indicators: not studying hard (27% government, 25% private) and peer pressure (23% government, 22% private). While government school children scored slightly higher on these indicators, the differences were not statistically significant. However, there were some clear differences that distinguished the two school management types from each other. A considerable number of children cited poverty as a potential barrier that could prevent them from achieving their future career goals, with government school children more likely to be affected by poverty than their private counterparts (36% compared to 23%). Conversely, private school children were more likely to lack the opportunity to access government SHSs, which are perceived to be better than private ones (9% compared to 2%) and to experience other barriers (22% compared to 13%).

There has been an increase in the prevalence of low-fee private schools in the developing world. However, little has been written about the differential effect school choice has on children's aspirations and their valued occupational goals. Consistent with Srivastava (2013a), I found a substantial highly aspirational advantage among private school children compared to those in the government sector. Although private school children scored on average 9% and 4% more than government school children on being a doctor and lawyer respectively, part of this difference could reflect the perceptions people hold about private schools. However, Akaguri (2011a, b) found that the reality is quite different. Being a farmer was not aspired to by children of either school type, despite Ghana being an agrarian economy.

However, the findings above were based only on descriptive analysis (difference in means). To understand the determinants of schooling aspiration, the study further used OLS to explore the relationships between school type, children's background characteristics, and schooling aspirations.

In the OLS analysis, two models were specified. The first model (Table 7.2) included the school type dummy variable for which government school was the reference. It also included children's individual and household characteristics and aspiration variables. In the second model (Table 7.3), the school dummy variable was removed from the analysis.

Table 7.2 Ordinary Least Square on career aspiration determinants with school type and background characteristics

Professional career	*Coef.*	*std. err.*	*t-value*	*P>t*
Public School	-0.0212	0.0100	-2.1200	0.0350
Pupil's age	-0.0010	0.0026	-0.4000	0.6910
Male pupil	0.0003	0.0094	0.0300	0.9750
Educated dad	-0.0223	0.0232	-0.9600	0.3370
Educated mum	0.0001	0.0146	0.0100	0.9920
Own radio	0.0036	0.0117	0.3100	0.7540
Own TV	-0.0151	0.0210	-0.7200	0.4710
Siblings	0.0168	0.0142	1.1800	0.2370
Muslim pupil	0.0036	0.0098	0.3700	0.7110
Poverty	-0.0082	0.0146	-0.5600	0.5720
Barriers:				
Not studying	-0.0063	0.0148	-0.4300	0.6660
Opportunity	-0.0017	0.0245	-0.0700	0.9440
Peer pressure	0.0095	0.0151	0.6300	0.5270
Benefits:				
Parent	0.0151	0.0167	0.9000	0.3670
Community	0.0261	0.0156	1.6700	0.0950
Earn living	0.0239	0.0162	1.4700	0.1410
Gain respect	0.0238	0.0155	1.5300	0.1260
Strategy:	-0.0212	0.0100	-2.1200	0.0350
Pass exam	-0.0010	0.0026	-0.4000	0.6910
Attendance	0.0003	0.0094	0.0300	0.9750
Higher education	-0.0223	0.0232	-0.9600	0.3370
Constant	0.0001	0.0146	0.0100	0.9920

Note: Significance levels: 1% p>0.01; 5% p>0.05; 10% p>0.1

Table 7.2 above presents the ordinary least square regression on pupil's career aspiration determinants with the school type dummy. The aspiration variable was derived from students' responses to what occupation they wanted to be in when they left school. Table 7.2 investigates whether school management type or children's background determines schooling aspirations. The regression is also conditional on children's self-assessed response to what benefit they will derive from achieving their occupational goal, whether

perceived barriers might prevent them from achieving this career goal, and the strategies that might help them to fulfil their future career aspirations.

Career aspirations included becoming a doctor, nurse, teacher, or other professional, such as a lawyer, police officer, or soldier. From Table 7.2, it can be seen that the type of school a child attended was a significant determinant of their aspiration in terms of career goals. Also, compared with private school children, government school children's professional career aspirations on average were lower by about 2 percentage points. From Table 7.2, it can also be seen that children's family background was not associated with career aspiration.

These findings are complimented by the pooled regression on pupils' aspirations in Table 7.3 which excludes the school type dummy variable. Children's individual and household characteristics, were not significant determinants of career aspirations. The only important indicator of schooling aspiration was school type, as seen in Table 7.2.

Table 7.3 Ordinary Least Square on career aspiration determinants without school type

Professional career	*Coef.*	*std. err.*	*t-value*	*P>t*
Pupil's age	-0.0022	0.0026	-0.8400	0.4030
Male pupil	0.0007	0.0094	0.0700	0.9420
Educated dad	-0.0200	0.0233	-0.8600	0.3900
Educated mum	0.0027	0.0146	0.1800	0.8550
Own radio	0.0020	0.0117	0.1700	0.8650
Own TV	-0.0141	0.0210	-0.6700	0.5010
Siblings	0.0140	0.0142	0.9900	0.3220
Muslim pupil	0.0025	0.0098	0.2600	0.7950
Barriers:				
Poverty	-0.0121	0.0145	-0.8300	0.4050
Not studying	-0.0094	0.0147	-0.6300	0.5260
Opportunity	0.0036	0.0245	0.1500	0.8830
Peer pressure	0.0068	0.0151	0.4500	0.6520
Benefits:				
Parent	0.0157	0.0168	0.9400	0.3490
Community	0.0251	0.0156	1.6100	0.1090
Earn living	0.0240	0.0163	1.4700	0.1410
Gain respect	0.0255	0.0155	1.6400	0.1010
Strategy:				
Pass exam	0.0159	0.0141	1.1300	0.2580
Attendance	-0.0020	0.0237	-0.0800	0.9340

Higher education	0.0219	0.0270	0.8100	0.4180
Constant	1.0022	0.0497	20.1500	0.0000

Note: Significance levels: 1% p>0.01; 5% p>0.05; 10% p>0.1

According to students' responses, children from both school management types saw some benefits of education (supporting parents, helping their community, earning a living, and gaining respect). This means that there was not much difference between government and private schools. Students from both school types had a perception that not studying, poverty, lack of opportunities, and peer pressure might serve as barriers to their career aspirations. They were also aware of strategies that could help them achieve their aspirations (attending classes, passing exams, accessing higher education).

This implies that children in both government and private schools expected social and economic returns from their education in equal measure and believed that education was associated with achieving these returns/benefits.

Human capital theory assumes that educational decisions are only considered instrumental, rational, and utility-maximizing (Schltz, 1961). However, the causal role of economic return to education is brought into question here. The analysis shows that economic gains were not the primary reason behind children's schooling aspirations. This is consistent with Rolleston and Oketch's (2008:332) findings on Ghana, that students indicated 'develop Ghana' as one of the benefits of education. More than half of private and government school children chose helping their nation over earning an income. When considering the benefits of their career choice, a greater percentage of government school children put helping their community before earning a living. However, Rolleston and Oketch (2008:332) argue that this could be linked to microeconomic motives. Further, private school children considered being respected as more important than helping their community. Certain strategic indicators could also help children achieve their future career objectives. In the urban context, the majority of both private and government school children saw passing their exams as key to achieving their future career goals.

Education for All imposes a duty of care on governments and families to support children's education so they can have freedom to flourish (Robeyns, 2006). In the inner-city schools studied, higher school support for books tended to come from government schools (as indicated by current support). However, government school children were more likely to require support for fees and lunch (support needed now), even though their tuition was free. Government school children were more likely than their private school

peers to require support (future support needed) for lunch and teaching materials in the future. Further, government school children were more likely to have poverty as a barrier to achieving their future occupational goals. Surprisingly, private school children were more likely to experience lack of opportunity as a threat to their future occupational ambitions.

These data indicate that even at the basic educational level, the children in the study community were already aspiring to occupations they valued. The analysis suggests that the children viewed education as an instrument – something that will help them secure jobs, make them productive, and enable them to achieve their future goals. To this end, private school children are associated with highly skilled professions, 'legitimising' the perceptions that low-fee private schools offer better chances and hope for the poor. However, inner-city living and vulnerability are inextricably tied. Various astounding dimensions of barriers relate to children's schooling aspirations to various degrees, irrespective of their choice of school. While education might provide better future career options for the children in the study community, there appears to be a 'reproduction' of marginalising differences (UNICEF, 2012), at least when the aspirations of government and private schools were compared.

In short, these results accept the hypothesis that children from private and government schools expressed their future educational careers based on what careers they might pursue after school. This indicates that children from government and private schools believed that schooling might help them achieve their future careers. However, there were other constraints associated with the children in both school management types. This finding is not surprising as recent research into human capital formation in Ghana indicates that a significant number of poor children at the basic school level lack the basic support and cognitive development fundamental to the flourishing of human capital and capability and improved economic prospects (Rolleston, 2009; Rolleston and Oketch, 2008). Hence, children's level of schooling support patterns and constraints in the inner-city community reflect the way in which relatively rich households are able to act in support of their children's aspirations. Yet, these findings notwithstanding, children from both poor and relatively rich households in the sample had high schooling aspirations. Additionally, both government and private school children did not consistently cite economic motive as the reason for going to school. What follows is an engagement with interview participants to gain a better understanding of their schooling aspirations.

7.3. Explaining the schooling aspirations of private and government school parents.

The previous section examined children's self-reported schooling aspirations. The quantitative analysis explored in the previous chapter provides a basis for exploring the differences between the aspirations of parents in government and private schools in the inner-city area. Given that private schools are not fee-free, do private school parents have higher aspirations than government school parents? A key objective of this section is to discover how those involved in children's schooling spoke about the motivations they attached to school access. I was particularly interested in opinions regarding children's future occupations and the narratives surrounding them.

7.3.1 How do government and private school parents' aspirations compare?

The motivations behind why parents might send a child to school are significant for understanding how they might respond to schooling. Households expect high economic returns from education in Ghana (Rolleston and Oketch, 2008). Therefore, families living in an inner-city might decide to send their children to school to gain future economic benefits. However, there are increasing difficulties for the poorest in accessing an educational route out of poverty (Rolleston and Oketch, 2008).

This section utilises interview extracts obtained from 11 parents to demonstrate parents' aspirations regarding their children's schooling outcomes. The establishment of education as a route to higher occupational earnings by children and their families was identified. There was little evidence of lack of aspiration, with parents from both school types expressing broadly comparable high schooling aspirations for their children. However, private school parents tended to prescribe a career path, while government school parents tended to support their children's preferred career choice:

> I would like my daughter to become a medical doctor or a banker. **She herself has been saying that.** (009, government school parent, Muslim, with no education).
>
> My children … I want them to be medical doctors, especially, the one in class six. **The girl, she wants to be a doctor.** I want my second child to be a pilot. I would very much like for them to have further education in the United Kingdom (013, government school parent with no schooling).
>
> I will be glad if they become the president of Ghana (016, government school parent who dropped out of school).

> The subject I wanted her [daughter] to study … she didn't like it in the beginning but accepted my choice of studying science (023, private school dad who had returned to education).

Government school parents, it appeared, had never navigated the education terrain themselves, and were ready to listen to their first-generation learners as to what they wanted to do in the future. These parents had high educational aspirations for their children, but a difficulty was how they should know, for example, what subjects their children should study to achieve their career goals. This raises questions about the education system, and whether there is career development advice for parents. In contrast to government school parents, private school parents tended to view themselves in an advisory capacity and seemed to direct their children to follow specific career paths. This also had to do with these parents addressing the problems they themselves encountered as children and therefore being more inquisitorial and controlling when dealing with their children's future aspirations. There were also signs of 'adapted' aspirations ('my background is in journalism, but I teach instead') on the part of private school parents who found themselves surviving in professions they would otherwise not have preferred. One private school parent indicated:

> After my SHS exams, I didn't get a strong pass to go to the university. So, when I came to Accra, I combined working, as well as doing remedial classes to better my qualifications. Basically, I was working and studying at the same time. I went to a private university in the end. They run courses with the education department of Winneba University. I had classes studying journalism on both campuses, but the University of Winneba issues the certificates. **My background is in journalism, but I teach instead.** … As somebody with this level of education, I want the children to be in academia, and to have at least a PhD because that is something I dreamed for. I think I'll be able to see my children go to school to that level (025, private school dad with first degree).

Additionally, there were multiple influences on parents' aspirations. Parents in both school types in general tended to have experienced some childhood challenges in relation to their own schooling aspirations. Some of the parents had lost a dad who tended to be the main bread winner of the household, had gone on to live with other extended family members as house helps due to their parents' financial difficulties, or had dropped out of school due to 'pull' and 'push' factors (the pull and push factors consisted of childhood disadvantages that resulted in either dropping-out or not enrolling). For this reason, they did not have the opportunity to start or complete their education. They tended to have high career aspirations for their children irrespective of these challenges and school type:

> My father was in financial difficulty. So, they [parents] sent me off to live with my 'sister' [extended family member] so she could send me to school. And then, after my education, she will help me to learn a trade. My sister was unable to help me through schooling. I was rather helping her to sell her things in the market. At the age thirteen, I started doing business. I was selling biscuits and toffees [to survive]. I went through hardships which is why I'm very desperate now for my children to go to school, so they will be comfortable in the future. I don't want my children to suffer as I did. God forbids! (021, private school parent with no education).

> I went [to school] up to SS2, then I dropped out. I was working in the family business [antique] then. The art and crafts. It was a temptation. … I started doing the crafts job when I was ten years old. So, I had a lot of money in my pocket. I thought, what is the use of schooling? What is the reason why I should continue with my education? That *'pulled'* me out of school. If my father was thinking the way I am thinking … the best thing for him to have done was to 'push' me to finish university. I wanted to finish [university] but the money was 'pulling' me out (019, private school parent who dropped out of school).

> I was raised in a village in the Volta Region, a village that did not have a school [push factor]. I was in class one when my dad died. … Then my auntie who lived in Togo came for me. She took me to Togo to live with her. … Her intention was not sending me to school to continue my education. She had children, all of them went to school. When I had my own children, I decided, although I am poor, I will look after them and put them through school. I will do my best for the children to have the best education (013, government school parent with no education).

These parental narratives focused more on addressing problems they themselves had encountered due to childhood disadvantages; they did not want their histories to repeat themselves for their children. This appears to have been a positive reaction, which might have helped counteract the risk factors associated with their children's schooling aspirations. This contrasts with the narratives of private school parents who tended to be relatively better off, and had had completely different childhood experiences:

> I am an entrepreneur, a worker, but I just resigned from my work last year so I can have time enough time to take care of my children properly. … my father is a retired police officer … I can cite my sister as an example. You know, my dad was a police officer. When he was transferred, my sister was in JHS. She had to be enrolled in the local government school. She often came home with complaints. … She was on top of the class. No one came close to her in terms of her performance. We had positive childhood schooling experiences (018, private school parent with good childhood schooling experiences).

Clearly, the childhood experiences of parents might have influenced their children's schooling aspirations. Parents who had had unpleasant childhoods were more motivated and felt determined to change the narratives of their own childhood experiences through being more committed to, and willing to do what it took to provide, positive experiences for their children. Likewise, parents with pleasant childhood experiences made sure their children had even better schooling experiences. Parental aspirations matter for children's success. Parents' perception of their children's schooling aspirations sends positive and encouraging signs to children that they will have better lives than their parents, especially among households with disadvantaged circumstances. Schoon et al. (2004) undertook a study on educational resilience, socio-economic adversity, and the desired levels of adult adaptation. They found that high parental aspirations correlate significantly with educational resilience among disadvantaged families and asserted that the outcome of parental aspirations could also be context-specific. It appears likely that the route through which parents realise their unattained schooling aspirations is through their aspirations for their children. Parents who wanted to go to school but never got the opportunity to do so or simply never went have higher educational aspirations for their children, just as do their more highly educated counterparts. This is an encouraging sign for their children's futures, especially for children from more disadvantaged backgrounds (Schoon et al., 2004), who are at risk of making fewer educational gains compared with their rich counterparts (Akyeampong, 2009). Parental occupational dissatisfaction is also related to higher aspirations for their children. However, from the foregoing, it is clear that parents from both schooling types had higher hopes for their children's schooling aspirations.

7.3.2 The complex and multi-dimensional nature of government and private school parents' aspirations for their children.

The government and private school parents interviewed had positive aspirations for their children. In fact, private school parents did not have fundamentally different aspirations from their government school peers. However, when examining responses to questions about how these high aspirations might turn into reality, it emerged that a 'real' aspiration was conditional on whether parents were hopeful that they could support their children to realise their aspirations. Some private school parents felt enrolling their children in good quality schools was key to maximising their children's schooling aspirations. To them, this meant being able to afford paying for tuition fees and other expenses so they could

send their children to a school they valued rather than a school which was free but which they felt could not help their children realise their future aspirations:

> We all know why parents choose to send their children to preparatory school or private school. The answer is as easy as a, b, c. Everyone knows about this. Who wants to be paying for private education? I learnt the government schools are free, why don't we go there …? Our main aim is to let the children have a very good education and we believe the government schools in the community cannot meet that aim. Although my opinion on how bad the government schools are, is based on what everyone else in the area says. One of the children completed … private school and got admission to Accra High School. She wrote the WAECE last year. I didn't know that we needed to buy a university forms and apply for a place for her. Secondly, I want her to study a subject of my choice as I want her to read medicine and become a pharmacist (023, private school dad).

While government school parents wanted their children to do well, there was a general uncertainty surrounding how they could pay for their children's further education. They felt their current circumstances – defined as a conditional: 'if the money is there …' – might affect their children's future aspirations:

> Well, I cannot sit here and determine what my children might do when they grow up … but I want them to become somebody in the future. If the money is there, they must go to the university if they pass their exams, and then become somebody (016, government school dad).

Both government and private school parents felt examinations defined who would go to higher education and go on to achieve their future career goals. They were expressing general perceptions people in the community held about the links between exams and better career aspirations. The private school parents' argument was that parents will send their children to schools which they think can give their children the best opportunity to acquire academic achievement which might help them to progress in life. They could only do so because they were optimistic that they could afford the costs.

Nevertheless, there were parents from both government and private schools who had internalised their vulnerability and left everything to 'destiny'. While they wanted them children to have good future careers, they felt they had no control over how they could be supported. They interpreted their efforts to support their children's schooling as constituting a full reliance on God, and that whether they succeed in achieving their future schooling purposes was up to Almighty God or Allah:

> Everyone has their own destiny. … You see, all the fingers are not the same. I do not have any money, but if you work very hard, God will

> also help you, so you can pay fees. … In this world, what you ask for is what God will give you. I am praying for my daughter to finish school, and if she wants to go to Polytechnique, at least. I have a child in class two now. I'm praying that he does well and finish all his education. After he finishes the school, I'm praying that he goes to senior secondary school and go higher (021, government school parent).
>
> I would like my children to continue with their education. I hope everything will be ok. With God … If you rely on God (017, private school parent).

Other parents expressed various degrees of uncertainty as to how they could support their children's education. These related to health issues, poverty, unforeseen circumstances such as losing a parent, and other vulnerabilities:

> If it gets to the point where I am not able to pay the fees, I will remove them from school. My husband died about two year ago. I am now living with the man who emerged from that room [lives in a room in a house]. I have no children with him. My biggest challenge now is having money to pay for my children school fees. Right now, I haven't got money. Even to give them pocket money is very difficult. I don't do anything now, ma. I am idle. I have no work to do [unemployed]. … I don't know [how to finance children's education]. So far as there is life, they will achieve it [schooling aspirations]. My children go to school every day, except when my son [one of the children is a sickle cell anaemia patient] is in crisis. For example, for the past two days he hasn't been to school. He only went to school today. Sometimes he gets admitted to the Korlebu hospital. Sometimes one week, sometimes, two weeks (017, government school parent).

Other government school parents were actively exploring back-up plans to buttress any unforeseen circumstances:

> I'll keep working hard so, I can save some small money … and then pray to Allah. Inshallah! (009, government school parent who sold cooked rice at the roadside).

Strangely, this appeared to be the norm rather than the exception for government school parents interviewed; there was a sense of despair echoing amongst them. While private school parents were generally self-assured, some of them had no back-up plans but believed that not being lazy and fearing God were good back-up plans:

> All the fingers are not the same. But if you work hard God will also help you if you're not lazy. I do not have money but if you work hard, God will also help you to pay for the school fees (021, private school mother who owns a table-top shop).

These beliefs held by parents might have implications for their children's future aspirations. Archer and Yamashita (2003) studied inner-city households' schooling aspirations and concluded that children align their aspirations towards the interaction between family resources and beliefs of what is possible.

7.3.3 The interplay of government and private school parents' norms and educational aspirations

An interesting way that parents' aspirations for their children's schooling emerged related to family norms. I found a high prevalence of normative family narratives among the parents interviewed, with only highly educated parents taking for granted the idea that an occupation is something that 'we encourage if that is where children's interests lie' and if children want to pursue it. For example, interviewee 018 was from an educated background but ran a seamstress business. Her father was a high-ranking police professional and her mother was a trained teacher by profession. However, she was currently a businesswoman. Her aspirations for her children were strongly rooted in intergenerational narratives of 'exploration' for what one values and is capable of doing. Interviewee 018 talked about wanting her children to have high educational qualifications but said she would allow them to switch professions if that was what they desired. She commented:

> As a parent, I always observe children to see where their interest lies. And then, you allow them to explore. I will not necessarily push them to do what I want them to do … what I like. Even if they want to learn how to sew, I would like them to pursue it (018, private school parent).

However, for some private school parents, children's aspirations were strongly grounded in an aura of 'modernity' which was woven into family conversations:

> These days, we are in the modern era. You cannot decide for your child what you want them to do. It is very, very dangerous. (019, private school dad).

Conversely, government school parents tended to model their children's schooling aspirations towards careers which might serve as a route out of poverty. When asked if a parent would like his children to follow his footsteps by becoming a security guard, he responded:

> Over my dead body. I want them to become somebody in the future. When they finish [name of school] and pass their exams, they have to go to senior secondary school. They must go to the university and then become somebody (016, government school parent).

Private school parents seemed to see someone as ‘a nobody’ if they had not gone through the mill to acquire a university degree. Therefore, to become ‘somebody’, it was necessary that one gets a degree. University degrees seemed to be associated with the capability to achieve anything one sets one’s mind to:

> If you are not educated [a graduate], what can you become? … So, for me, education is everything really, because after you’ve got the knowledge and the education, what are you going to do? You can be a king, you can be a rich man, and you can be anything. So, knowledge is first. That gives you everything you want… In the past, ‘we Muslims’ believed that even when you went to the university, you’ll just come back to the market to sell groceries. We thought ‘travelling’ was the best – that was in my time. But we forget that even when you sell tomatoes or onions in the market as a graduate, you will know how to manage your money and the business better than the one who doesn’t have higher education (023, private school dad).

Clearly, this private school dad was in a sense aspirational of higher education and its ability to promote children’s capability and the freedom to function at any job they choose to do. With this in mind, households tended to make monetary sacrifices to make sure their children could have the freedom to function better than their parents. They had hopes and aspirations that while in the city, they could find jobs and earn income. Most of them tended to be market traders. However, they were determined to make sure their children went to school and got better careers than what they were currently doing. It appears that selling groceries is no longer a valued occupation in considering young children’s development and well-being. Second-generation migrants are expected to go to school, become graduates and take on careers that are recognised. Parallel with schooling aspirations were parents expressed religious aspirations for their children:

> You know we Muslims, if you don’t have Islamic studies, it’s like you’re lost. … Circular education would not have provided me with such moral values. I know the instruction Allah has given us, and I’m following them. That’s more important than anything else (013: government school parent).

This government school parent clearly saw Islamic studies as crucial when it came to addressing moral issues. This appeared to be driven by Islamic religious culture. This belief was held by Muslim parents in the private schools as well. Muslim parents in both school types made sure their children attended the Madrassa after school and had lessons in Islamic studies. Yet, a career as a Muslim cleric was perceived as a ‘calling’ rather than an open career a child could easily aspire to and achieve. Even when seen as a ‘calling’, it appeared that the only career one could have as an Islamic scholar was teaching:

> People who go to Arabic school teach children… I'm not saying that's what I want [my children to become]. It will come to a time when if you haven't gone to school, you won't be able to make ends meet. It is not just within formal employment. Because one has to know how to communicate in other languages. I have some knowledge of Arabic and speak Arabic. I can speak it wherever I go but I can't speak English. For this reason, I want my children to get to know both systems of education so they can manage better (013, government school parent).

> I pay GHS 50 every three months [GHS 200 a year] for my child's Islamic studies. You see, you have to believe in God. Every Muslim child above the age of five must attend Madrassa. Every Muslim child must go to Madrassa … do you understand? (019, private school dad).

Motivated by this notion, Muslim parents did all they could to support their children's Islamic lessons which could give their children the freedom to speak Arabic as well as English through formal schooling.

7.3.4 Parents views on gender and children's occupational aspirations

When exploring parents' views of their children's schooling aspirations, it emerged that their support of their children's future occupational aspirations was conditional – if parents were relatively wealthier, renting a one- or two-bed apartment rather than living in a room in a house, they encouraged their daughters to have high schooling aspirations. This category of parents was also altruistic and expected no monitory reward from their children. As a private school parent explained:

> I want my children to be independent after school. That is to look after themselves. I only want them to stand on their own feet. I don't want to depend on them when I'm old. I don't want them to depend on anyone either, not even their husbands. No! Not the husbands. If they focus on their husbands, they will lose their mind. If they're able to stand on their own two feet, men will be running after them. If they hear that they're working in the Ministry. If they're independent and the men misbehave, then they will show them the way out (019, private school parent).

This parent has his own antique business and rented a one-room flat in the community. He had two girls. The rationale behind his support of his children's future occupational aspirations was simply altruistic, and he was less likely to depend on his children when he got old. This was echoed by another private school parent when asked what benefit she might receive after her children had finished school and were in their preferred occupations:

> I will just tell myself that I have done a good job. I think as a parent, my principle is that, when you look after your children or the ones you may look after, even though we say, look after your children for them

> to look after you in the future, for me I don't rely on that. I really want to set a standard for myself. Instead of them relying on me, I would rather prefer them to be reliant on me when it comes to asking for loans. However, if they give me something, I will not refuse it. Some parents might say, look, I looked after you, I sacrificed, and I sold my clothes to look after you … (018, private school parent).

This parent went on to highlight what might prevent her girls from achieving their future occupational aspirations:

> It is not all women or men that are supportive in our community. If you're married and wants to go to the university and then your husband is saying, I'm not allowing you to do … There are men like that right now as I speak to you. There is a man whose wife wanted to go into further education but then he said no! He wanted her to do something else. Because they do not want you to be at the same level as themselves. I remember when I told my husband in February about going onto further education. He didn't say anything until I started. And then he said people were telling him that if he allowed me to do so, I was going to leave him (018, private school parent).
>
> If some man came to me and say they want to marry my daughter, while she hasn't finished all her education? I will chase them away! Oh yes, I will sack them properly. This is not a joke [appears very emotional]. …my daughters is going to school, until they finish school and are working … they can do so when they finish all their schooling but not before (019, private school parent).

Several private school parents concurred with these views, articulating that girls have limited opportunities to achieve their aspirations due to the cultural positions they find themselves in. They asserted that girls have limited chances to progress to become what they have freedom to become once they get married. They may have the ability to carry on with their aspirations but as soon as they get married, some lose the capability to assert themselves and become what they would like to become. Interestingly, it was also revealed that most married women had to look after themselves and their children as the husbands have the right to marry multiple women. In this sense, it might be difficult for women to carry on with their career aspirations:

> He has married another woman and is living with her in Nigeria. That is why I am alone here with the children. He only comes here once a year. … Because of the children, I cannot travel there. His employers give him time off every three months, but he decides to stay there anyway. You see, I am looking after them here, he's not here. When I had my second child, I was unable to work for about three months, the teachers kept sending the kids home for fees which I didn't have. I had to remove the children from the fee-paying school to the government

> one. They won't be sacked whiles in the government school, as they will not pay fees (014, government school parent).

As noted earlier, parents generally worried about their daughters not being able to have freedom to pursue their dreams, especially if they got married before accomplishing their dreams. In this sense, gender was a major theme connected to girls' education. Amongst parents in both school management types; reference was made to girls' schooling and whether the skills and knowledge they acquire through education might attract the same returns as boys.

It also emerged that sometimes, girls are given out for marriage before they complete their basic education:

> For example, one time we had to go and sit on a case about a girl who attended one of the government schools in the community, where the girl was being given out for marriage. A class six girl, being forced into marriage. So, we tell the metro counsellors to sit on such cases. We ask them, do you know what kind of girl they will turn into? Now we have women MPs, presidents, and many occupying key positions in the world. … your girl is not a bad girl, she is not bad educationally, and you want to force her into marriage? If you want her to marry, wait till she finishes her education. She will have some skills, otherwise, if she is going to depend solely on a man, and the man is not educationally sound, … your child will suffer if she doesn't complete her education. The small monies you receive from the man now … The girl was being given out to a man over fifty years. So, then, the counsellor came in and talked and talked. The father understood, so the girl had the chance to continue her education (015, circuit supervisor).

This shows that enrolling girls in school alone cannot guarantee that girls will have the freedom to be what they want to become. To this end, Colclough et al. (2003) assert that it is always useful to examine the details and context of gender relations to understand the relative life-chances for boys and girls due to external restrictions that are profoundly social and cultural in nature.

7.3.5 What do parents see as barriers to children's schooling aspirations?

The key objective of this section was to discover what participants said constituted barriers to their children's schooling aspirations, and the meanings they attached to them. I was particularly interested in views on poverty, slum environment, lack of opportunity, and how these interact to impact on children's schooling aspirations. Responding to questions about what might constrain their children's schooling aspirations, it emerged that both private and government school parents had high aspirations for their children. However, there were concerns that lack of essential resources could serve as barriers to

obstruct children's aspirations. One such barrier related to poverty. As a government school single mother explained:

> The difficulty I'm facing is that, we are expected to pay a lot of school expenses [GHS 25 a year] but I have not got that amount of money. I do worry because, now my daughter is in class six. I would want her to continue with her education to JSS, but I do not think I would have the money needed to do so. I always struggle to get money to pay for the school expenses for my daughter. The tuition for the government school that my daughter attends is free, however, there is a further GHS 45 that I pay so my child will have teachings in Arabic and other Islamic-related studies. The cost of this tuition is not free, and the only school that provides this important education is the one my child attends (009, government school parent).

This mother and her thirteen-year-old daughter (thirteen at the time of the interview) had migrated from the Northern Region of Ghana to live in the slum with her sister. She shared a room in a house with her sister and her four children. She had come to help her with her 'waakye' (rice and beans) business and received wages for her services. She had two other children she left behind in the North. They never enrolled in school, although education is free in the North and most children benefit from the school feeding programme if they enrol in school. However, she was unable to pay the school expenses and buy school uniforms for her older children, despite the free tuition fees. When asked why she moved to Accra, she explained:

> The reason why I moved from the North to live in this slum is that, in the North, during the dry season there is nothing to do to earn money with. After the farming season is over, we tend to be idle. I decided to move to Accra where there is an opportunity to help business owners who sell food to people and earn some living. With this money, I'm able to send my last child to school as the older ones did not go to school (009, government school parent).

Clearly, parents had high schooling aspirations for their children. The reality was that the relationship between education and poverty was complex and contingent. Poverty interacted with other factors to serve as barriers to their children's future aspirations, as portrayed by other parents:

> You see, we have six children in this room, the room next to mine has eight people in them, the other eight rooms have even more people than ours. There are other problems. One of the problems is that, when the children came back from school yesterday, they asked for exams fees, but I told them to exercise patience because there is no money. The business is not profitable [she had a table-top shop in front of the house]. Business is not at all good these days. What happens is that, I

> give the children whatever sales I make the previous day to them, so they can buy food whilst at school. I need to pay GHS 10 for each one of the six children. So, together, it is GHS 60. … And I must buy food, pay light bills, pay for water as well as rent and other expenses. This is just to scratch the surface. There are other problems. The other tenants are facing the same problems, but I'm determined to see them all through schooling, so they can be who they want to be (013, government school mother).

> I was unable to settle the fees of the private school my children attended because I am the only one paying for their fees and looking after them. My husband has migrated to Nigeria and giving all the attention to the other wife he lives with. … In a compound house, people gossip a lot. They started talking about why my children were at home. I was so ashamed (014, private school parent who moved her children to a government school).

> I am a widow. My husband relatives took over everything he had. They wanted to take the children away too, but I resisted. They will end up not allowing them to continue with their education. One of the children suffers from sickle cells, when he is in crisis, I send him to the hospital and need to buy drugs. Sometimes, he gets admitted to the hospital for a week or two weeks, but I am unemployed. … I would like for my children to continue their education. The children like studying. For example, the oldest one likes studying. Whilst everyone is asleep, he will be studying. I want them to go higher, it's not a joke … I want them to finish university (017, government school parent).

Responding to questions about how poverty could impact on their children's education, it emerged that some private school parents had strong sentiments regarding how poverty impacts on their children's education:

> I now look after my husband who had an accident years ago and unable to work as a result. He is unable to help with the children's schooling because of that. I now combine caring for my husband with seeing to the business and managing the children's school attendance. I always struggle with money – paying for their school fees and other expenses. Maybe, I can have someone to support me (021, private school parent).

Another private school parent added:

> I have my children in this private school due to not having a government school near to my house. Presently, I can pay for their school fees out of the money I earn through my fried plantain and yam business. However, when it gets to a point where I cannot pay for their school fees and other expenses, I will remove them and send them to a government school. They will be old enough to cross the road to the nearest government school (024, private school parent).

The commentaries above provide insights into the way individual parents perceived how economic and social factors combined to create barriers which made their children

'unfree' to participate fully to achieve their schooling aspirations. These sentiments were held by head teachers from both school management types:

> You know, the government is not bringing the books now. So, it means that we have to find a way to provide the poor and needy, who cannot afford exercise books with A4 or any papers we can get our hands on, so they can participate in class. Many of them are very deprived. They cannot afford to buy exercise books. You see, most times, two-thirds or one third of the class do not participate in class exercise due to them not having the necessary tools. This means that the objectives set for a lesson cannot be achieved. … Sometimes, children come to school late because they send their little sibling to the nursery before coming to school (002, government school head teacher).

Interestingly, a private school head teacher echoed the views raised by the above government school head teacher, commenting that:

> They do not have textbooks. They are in school, no textbooks. They are in school, no textbooks. So, assuming giving him or her work … they go home, no book to read and the parent would not show any concern that oh my child should have books to read at home. … so, the work you give him or her, he comes back to school with the same work tomorrow [untouched]. Some children get punished but clearly, it is not their fault. The responsibility of the parent has been neglected. … If education is perceived as the power to rule one's future, then this means, that the child has no future (R2, private school head teacher/proprietor).

These constraints were typically viewed as economic and social barriers that were distinguished from mere inability of children to achieve their educational goals. Here there were a range of collective agents, with parents and the government imposing constraints on children's schooling participation. Within the Education for All policy, every child is supposed to have the freedom to enjoy schooling without any constraints, such as fees (UNESCO, 2014). Accordingly, children in government schools were supposed to be given exercise books and textbooks but this tended to amount to lip service at the implementation stage. There was a sense of frustration among head teachers from both school management types in respect of the various constraints which they felt restricted children's access to schooling. Head teachers from government schools acknowledged that children attended school for free but felt the intergovernmental agencies which needed to supply the needed learning materials invariably wash their hands of their duties. A government school head teacher remarked:

> You see, we need certain amenities that will facilitate our work. These are in terms of learning materials. Every term, we are expected to be given enough materials, but we don't get them. For example, when

> school re-opened, we were supposed to have received new registers, teachers' notebooks and learning materials. Then there are problems with the capitation grants too. For the whole of last academic year, not a pesewa was paid. First term, second term, third term, no capitation grant. It's in arrears, they say they'll pay (002, government school head teacher).

This head teacher held the view that the lack of receipt of learning material was not well understood by parents. This set the school on a collision course with parents who thought that the head teachers had received the learning materials from the government but were still asking parents for the money, which they did not have, to buy the learning materials:

> We are now trying to sensitise parents to support us. They need to support us. You see, politicians are different kind of people. They always paint a very radiant picture of the situation. They can even barber you. They go around telling parents … they say, we will give you school uniform … All for political gains. At the beginning of the term, a parent came in to ask why her children have not received exercise books. This is because she heard on the radio that, free exercise books have been supplied to every child. I said, my friend, did you see the car that supplied the books? Then she said, no, I heard about it on the radio. I said, I beg you, I'll not risk losing my job for stealing exercise books. If they should bring any exercise books for me to distribute, I will. When they bring them, they tell us the number of books we should give to each child. We account for it and report back (002, government school head teacher).

Such actions undermined the legitimate role of and trust in teachers and head teachers as the protectors of children and parents' interests and concerns regarding their rights to learning material and access to quality education. It appears that parents blamed the school authorities for their children's inability to access the required learning materials. In one sense, government schoolteachers did not have the appropriate teaching materials due to delays in receiving supplies. This obstacles in government schools included the challenge of pressure and time constraints associated with classroom arrangements, the problem of equity of access for children to engage in classroom activities due to lack of resources to engender class participation, and a lack of funding (capitation grant) for additional key learning materials. The circuit supervisor expressed her concerns regarding quality education and demonstrated leadership that resulted in a teacher's investment in supplementary book despite significant challenges. The circuit supervisor explained:

> In the school where I just came from, Kindergarten children were doing picture reading, but the teacher and the children did not have picture books. How are they going to picture read without a picture book? The teacher said, I draw it [picture] on the board. And I said to her, would

> your drawing be appropriate? How will they identify [the] pictures? I then asked the head teacher to go to the Topman bookshop to see if he can get a few … you know in the KG, we have what is called the big book. It has pictures and other things. I said, get five each for KG1 and KG2. If the teacher opens it on the board, it is big enough for them to see. This is better than telling me you draw it on the board. Your drawing cannot depict the real thing (015, circuit supervisor).

However, despite the dedicated efforts of the circuit supervisor, a lack of financial resources served as a barrier and it is questionable whether efforts to provide equitable access to children's rights to education could be sustained in the community. While both the government and private schools faced the difficulty of equity and funding of access to materials for all children due to school and family finances, it emerged that children in private schools were less likely to have a sustainable opportunity to have learning materials and tools that are necessary for gaining skills and knowledge. Children in the private schools were responsible for buying their own learning materials. This resulted in an increasing divide among the 'haves and have nots' – advantaged and disadvantaged children – in private schools:

> One of the difficulties we always encounter come up at the beginning of every term. When the term begins, we always need money – such monies come in the form of fees. We take these fees from parents to take care of other stuff [including the purchase of learning materials and payments of salaries]. Because most of the parents have not been to school before, they don't understand why they should pay. And then, most of them, like the term begins at a particular time and about three or four months [into the term] … they won't pay the fees (005, private school head teacher).

A further revelation regarding the private schools was that teachers continued to support the children in their care in order to advance their right to education. However, private school head teachers struggled to understand and prioritise children's rights to education in the midst of competing priorities like paying teachers and other staff, despite the continued advocacy for education for all children. They felt that tuition fees comprised the single most important item contributing to the management of private schools. One private school head teacher referred to situations which often obstructed disadvantaged children' rights and access to learning materials:

> We have very prominent people here, doctors, lawyers, teachers and then we have the very low people. Market women, shoemakers, whatever, we have all sorts. But most of the people who come here are from a low-income background. In fact, there are several people who are unable to pay anything at the end of the term. I want to give you the

> list of people who have not paid any money at all. We've been asked to sack them from school because they cannot come to school without paying any fees. There is going to be a kind of audit to find out those in the system who owe fees and haven't paid anything at all to discontinue (003, private school head teacher).

While some children who discontinue schooling due to fee non-payment might go back to school subject to availability of limited places in the government sector or join another private school, Rolleston (2009) points out that such children who fall within these categories receive incomplete basic education which is insufficient for their human capital flourishing.

Once rural-to-urban migrants settle in the slums it is assumed that families will naturally find gainful employment and, in the process, have money to buy food for their children while in school (Awumbila et al., 2014). The data suggest that for many children, benefiting from school feeding programmes may not be taken for granted. Time and again head teachers spoke about children missing lunch, and the need for some children to go to the market to wait on their parents and either going hungry if their parents had not sold anything for the day or spending time at the market until their parents made some sales:

> Now maybe the child needs something. He comes here, and there was not enough money. And he is hungry, all that the teacher is saying … it goes through one ear and goes out the other. No food, he's hungry. He cannot learn (002, government school head teacher).

> The children are ready to learn, they come to school. The problems are more with the parents … getting them what they need (Voice 006, government school head teacher).

The circuit supervisor in charge of the schools in the community pointed out that sometimes parents genuinely wanted their children to attend school, but their household background restricted what they could do to support their children's education. What seemed to fuel the situation was the precarious nature of their livelihoods. If market days provided the opportunity to make more money, then poorer households were willing to improve their economic circumstances by taking children out of school to engage in economic activities on market days.

> The children … mmm … you know this is a poor community, and most of them, especially, during market days … some of them would rather go and help their mothers at the market. Some of them have problems. They will help the parents to sell something small. And some of them, sometimes, they go to the market to collect money for feeding. They say, me I am hungry, I'm going to collect my feeding money. Some are

> so poor that they are unable to get money to pay for their BECE registration (015, circuit supervisor).

However, this appeared to be more an exception than the rule for relatively better-off children who attended private schools. Parents in this category did not have problems supporting their children's education and interpreted their children's right to education as their responsibility. To this end, they were prepared to do what it took to maintain their children in their 'valued' school type which was invariably private schools. This view was illustrated by a private school parent who had her children in two separate private schools:

> We do pay feeding fee of 60 GHS. This is for lunch – the 60 GHS is for one month. The older ones also pay feeding fee on top (tuition fees). I give them pocket money. We pay 500 GHS per term for the older boy. The fee for the other one is 445 GHS. For the one in the other private school, we pay GHS 50 per term (018, private school parent).
>
> Oh, it is not just the money, money is not a problem … I don't joke at all with my children. I do everything for them [children] (021, private school parent).

Clearly, there was a great contrast between the very poor and relatively richer families. The relatively richer families were able to meet their children's nutritional needs while in school. One piece of research from Ghana considered how nutrition affects children's educational access and attainment in Ghana. The findings showed that:

> Poor nutritional status of school children is a potential contributory factor which can contribute largely to educational exclusion (Buxton, 2011:37).

Poorer children in Ghana lack adequate nutritional needs and often enrol in school late (Buxton, 2011), and as Rolleston (2009) argues, access to education is influenced by socio-economic and household welfare, with the advantaged children more likely to finish JSS than their disadvantaged peers (Akyeampong et al., 2012).

The nature of the inner-city was also a key issue that seemed to put constraints on children's schooling, and which might have put some limitations on their future aspirations. There were several participants who were concerned about how inner-city living could have a lasting impact on children's access to education and their future career aspirations. Regardless of which school type children attended, comments were made about peer pressure and the tendency of children to be negatively influenced by others:

> The children who are not going to school [dropouts] are into drugs and smoking. Indian hemp and all sorts of drugs. Children under eleven are

> walking in the streets. They are all over the place at school times. I think the issue is, there are no places. There are no admissions in the public schools. And some parents do not care (010, assemblyman).

Discussions were focused on effects that vices can have on access to and quality of children's schooling. Participants talked about smoking, truanting, and the fact that younger children were at risk of being influenced to take drugs, and termed these as core aspects that were a violation of children's rights to schooling access and impeded the ability to develop their capabilities. In her interview, a government school parent expressed anxiety about her son's school attendance, worrying that he will continue truanting and join the wrong crowd. She lamented:

> Sometimes, Angle [not real name] would say he is going to school, but then people will tell me he wasn't at school. I've got the teacher's number and keep ringing her every time to make sure he is there [school]. That is why I go to the school regularly to make sure he is at school and not truanting. You know, he may go to where they [drug users] sell drugs and buy some for people who are already in it – running errands for them. Little by little, before you know it, he is in it – smoking. That is why I get mad anytime the teacher rings to report of his absence. Sometimes, I wish I removed him [from the school] but I try to restrain myself. Because if I do, it won't be good for his future. (Voice 014, government school parent).

Parents saw such actions as undermining children's attendance and their overall schooling aspirations. They also saw it as an impediment on children's wellbeing caused by people who they felt had negative influence on their children as they lacked the moral capacity to be around children. By design, one of the government schools in the community, which Angle attended, was expected to allow school children to get out of classes to practice their religious rights without being stopped by teachers. As mentioned earlier, children in the other schools could get out and walk to the market for feeding money, walk home alone after school to collect school fees, or go out to use the public toilet, especially for the one private school which had only one toilet facility for boys and girls, and one government school that had no toilet facilities. The issue was how they could carry on such duties without encountering people who might negatively influence them. Some parents in both school management types felt because they were responsible for their children's wellbeing, they had the right and duty to make sure their children were safe:

> You see, they smoke in groups and are at corners, and in different spots. For instance, these groups of people could shelter or entertain a truant child by bringing him to their fold till 3pm when school finishes. They can then go home as if nothing happened. You will think they went to

> school but actually, they went and hanged around people who smoke Indian hemp. There are those who sell, and smoke as well, which is why I don't want him to be part of this business (014, government school parent).
>
> What is worrying within this community is that, there are many boys who do not complete the basic education, and who spend their time aimlessly in groups, and at corners to smoke. This negatively affect other children. While I have seen so many children go down this way, they lack parental support. Helping them to learn a trade for instance might help, but I think, for many, it's down to poverty (024 government school parent).
>
> Sometimes, you go out in the middle of the night and you see small boys below ten and above … in the middle of the night. I keep asking myself, where are their parents? Because I wouldn't be comfortable letting children at that age be in the street around that time. And they will be with older children … twenty years and above (018, private school parent).
>
> In this community, many children have not been to school. You see for yourself. If you go around the community, children aged ten, eleven and twelve are just walking about in the community. This means, they are not going to school. No one needs to tell you. I see it with my own eyes. … You want to go to school, and if your friend doesn't like school and leave school … you are in trouble. Because it is very dangerous. They can negatively influence your child. They can go into trouble … and for the girls, sleeping around [and getting pregnant]. Even if the child is good, to be around people with bad … bad character can pull him down (019, private school parent).

I interpret the extracts above as illustrating how children's schooling aspirations had to do with more than just 'enrolment'; it was also a key responsibility of the government and families to make sure children attended and completed school. However, there was no legislative framework to hold parents to account when a child did not go to school. This is normative, but not deterministic, however, and the data contains several cases of parents who were doing their best to protect their children. This was exemplified by some government and private school parents who provided the impetus for reducing these risks to their children's education and future aspirations, and strongly implemented workable strategies towards making sure their children did not join the wrong crowd:

> I had six children, but I lost one. I have five now. He is the only one who doesn't want to do anything. He just roams about. He has been negatively influenced by friends, as he has so many of them. Sometimes, I keep shouting and shouting … so if I see him with a bad crowd, I start to insult him. Nowadays, he stays in the house more. … [Pointing at a boy] please this is my son, talk to him. Maybe, he will listen to you and go back to school (021, private school parent).

> I created classes [Islamic] for them, because I teach them Arabic. On this basis, I find time to help them in English, mathematics and other subjects as well. You see, that is what I do in the week. They have two lessons of Islamic teachings on weekends. With regards to the school they attend, if your 'boy' is doing something bad, they will tell you. And if the child is not doing well too, they will tell you. … You see, she [daughter] did not play at all with her studies. … She was very, very, serious (023, private school dad who dropped out of school).

> If you want your children to do well in this environment, you need to help them to avoid bad company, I mean bad friends. I always make sure they are not negatively influenced by bad friends. I try as much as possible to help them to avoid such friends who might lead them astray. I try my hardest to provide for them. If I don't have the money, I talk to them and tell them the truth that I haven't got it. I want them to avoid copying from other people. You see, these young girls around here, most of them have boyfriends. They get pregnant and have babies. The children can do whatever they like. I believe children's success is down to their parents. Girls need to be provided with their needs. For example, having sanitary towels when they need one. I try to buy her things, depending on the money available. On the part of the boys, there is always a problem of being recruited into the arm robbery business. I always advise them to be aware of these people and avoid them. The Christian religion helps them to lead good life (024, private school mother with no education.

7.4 Summary

This chapter has examined the schooling aspirations of government and private school children and their parents in the inner-city of Accra. Qualitative evidence provides a deeper understanding of relevant factors. The quantitative evidence rejects the hypothesis that private school households have higher aspirations than their government school counterparts. The main motivation of children's schooling aspirations was to help parents, especially for government school children. Government school children cited helping their communities as the benefit of their chosen careers, while private school children generally cited 'gaining respect' as the motivation behind their schooling aspirations. This is largely consistent with Rolleston and Oketch's (2008) findings in Ghana regarding the benefits of education, namely that the main benefit of education was not purely economic returns and earnings. The analysis also indicated patterns of association between types of strategies that might help children stay on course. Passing exams was overwhelmingly related to aspiring to achieve career goals for both government and private school children. However, private school children also appeared somewhat less self-assured regarding the likelihood of having opportunities after school than government school

children, perhaps reflecting the current labour market uncertainties in Ghana, a finding that is consistent with the literature on human capital, poverty, and education access in Ghana (Rolleston, 2009).

Nevertheless, the statistical results were only limited to children's schooling aspirations. Therefore, the qualitative section provided a deeper understanding of children's aspirations by interviewing parents. Parents from private and government schools' views were consistent with those of their children. Thus, they had high schooling aspirations and believe that through schooling, their children could achieve their future career goals. The evidence in this chapter also suggests that the right to fee-free policy education and capitation grant scheme eliminated the cost burden of parents, supporting Akaguri, (2011a.) that parents have to bear significant cost in their children's education. This implies that parents must have the necessary strategies in place for making sure children achieve their schooling aspirations. There were also a range of barriers that interacted to negatively impact on households' schooling aspirations. They included poverty and cultural and environmental factors, but these tended to affect government school households more than private school households. What follows is a discussion and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which individual and household characteristics are important factors in children's access to government and private schools. Given that schooling processes and social outcomes have been missing from the

literature comparing government and low-fee private schools in the global south, a further aim was to determine if differences exist between government and private school children's schooling experiences and aspirations, and whether any differences prevail after accounting for background characteristics that have been found to impact access.

I applied a social justice framework supporting the view that every child has the right to publicly provided schools (or private schools if they have a choice). Accordingly, I gathered empirical data on schooling choice, experiences, and aspirations of inner-city school children at primary grade 6 and JHS 3 levels, and identified key issues and challenges arising from the analyses. This chapter draws together the evidence and analyses of previous chapters, highlights this study's key contributions, and concludes by discussing areas for future research.

8.2 Overview of the study

Chapter one formed the introduction of the study by defining the research problem, rationale, significance, and the questions the study sought to answer. In chapter two, I discussed the contextual background of the study, while chapter three reviewed the relevant literature as well as the conceptual framework. Chapter four explored the methodology and methods. In chapters five, six, and seven, I analysed the data and illuminated the findings of the study.

8.3 Summary of major findings

In this study, I sought to determine the types of schools available to inner-city households, how they experience these schools, and how this influences their schooling aspirations. Overall, the study provided empirical evidence supporting the link between background characteristics and school access, experiences, and aspirations. I now revisit the research questions to consider how the analyses described in chapters five, six, and seven addressed the research questions.

8.3.1 What are the relationships between individual household characteristics and government or private school choice?

The first aim of the study was to examine the characteristics of households in an inner-city area of Accra which choose government or fee-paying schools. First, children's background characteristics were central to government or private school access. Households' selected school type was most strongly related to age, parental education, asset ownership, and number of siblings. The analysis also showed that an increase in a

child's age by at least one year (over-aged), a child coming from a larger family, and family ownership of a radio (basic asset indicator) increased a child's chances of enrolling in a government school. However, for some of these households, the inadequate or uneven supply of tuition-free government school places meant that they had no real access to government provision and settled for low-fee private schools for a period, until a place in the oversubscribed government schools became available. Conversely, a household having highly educated parents reduced the chances of choosing a government school. Households with more educated parents and less educated mothers were more likely to choose private schools, as they saw this as a better option for school success and educational progress for their children.

8.3.2 Do apparent differences exist between government and private schools in relation to school experiences, and if so, how do these differences vary by individual and household characteristics?

The second objective of this study was to examine the relative schooling experiences of government and private school children, and whether these differences varied in relation to a child's individual and household characteristics.

The evidence presented in chapter six suggested that there was a clear difference between government and private school children's school experiences and that the differences varied by children's background characteristics. Government school children had better teaching/learning experiences and were more satisfied with their overall schooling experiences than their private school peers. More specifically, when children were taught by government-trained schoolteachers, they reported overall satisfaction with their schooling experiences. Private school children were better at managing their classes than their government school counterparts. The policy environment in private schools supported and encouraged strict supervision, forcing teachers to stay on task and resulting in positive classroom management. Paradoxically, this resulted in higher teacher turnover as proprietors of private schools hired untrained teachers and fired them at the slightest misdemeanour. There was no difference in use of technology, students' attitude, and learning evaluation indices between the two school management types.

Additionally, over-aged children and boys had substantially negative schooling experiences irrespective of the type of school they attended. Children from Muslim households, those who worked after school, and those who had extra classes tended to express positive schooling experiences.

Overall, though, the general feeling was that both government and private school environments were uninspiring, violent, and uncomfortable, mainly because of the widespread and daily use of corporal punishment in schools.

8.3.3 What are the relationships between type of school management, individual and household characteristics, and schooling aspirations?

Evidence from chapter seven showed that government and private school households expected their children to become professionals, government employees, and, perhaps overoptimistically, the president of Ghana. They believed that schooling is a necessary and useful route to achieve these aspirations (future career goals). However, private school children substantially and significantly aspired to professional careers requiring further education. In this sense, government school children had lower aspirations to higher professional careers.

Children's individual and household characteristics were not significant determinants of career aspirations. Inner-city households formed positive opinions about what education could offer. More idealistically, children and their parents valued schooling as a route to 'gaining respect, earning income, and supporting family and community'. Generally, households of all backgrounds believed that education produced economic and social returns even though they had reservations about the ability of schools to help achieve these goals. Also, they were acutely aware that merely enrolling in school would not lead to achieving their schooling goals. They viewed regular attendance, doing well on exams, and keeping away from activities that would hinder attendance as strategies that would enable such schooling goals to be achieved.

8.4 Contribution to knowledge

Discussions of government and private schools often fail to consider schooling processes and social outcomes, as well as the long-term implications for and impacts on disadvantaged communities where educational provision is uneven. This study explored children's access to and parental choice of government or private school, children's experiences, and children's aspirations based on background characteristics. Overall, the analysis produced a clearer understanding of the complex mix of factors and conditions which determine parental choice and children's attitudes to government and private schools in an inner-city schooling environment. The next section presents key distinctive

contributions to knowledge. They include theoretical, empirical, conceptual, and methodological contributions.

8.4.1 Theoretical

A very significant contribution of the study is its review of three theoretical approaches – rights, human capital, and capabilities – and their strong relevance to the ways in which disadvantages and social injustice are explained (Hart 2012; Robeyns, 2006). As indicated in chapter three, existing analysis on school choice research tends to focus only on human capital theory and its return to education. This research has shown that this is a simplistic way of discovering injustice. The promoting of increased human capital theory effectiveness, and achievement research are not the necessary condition for promoting social justice. On the other hand, this study has shown that social justice, proxied by measures of schooling choice/access, experiences, and aspirations, remains the most important element for achieving sustainable development goals for every child, whether they have a natural academic aptitude or not.

8.4.2 Empirical

Another significant contribution relates to the empirical understanding of schooling choice/access in the developing world context. As noted earlier, the study concurs with much of the school choice literature on poor inner-city households with a high migrant population. The phenomenon of the poor and disadvantaged accessing fee-paying schools generates intense debate and controversy among scholars. Some postulate that private schools are affordable and a viable way of meeting the education for all and SDG4 goal of education for poor and disadvantaged households (Tooley and Dixon 2005a; Tooley et al. 2005). However, there is no convincing evidence that fee-paying private schools are viable for children from certain households and backgrounds. Being over-aged or Muslim reduces the chances of accessing private school. Government schools have children from the most disadvantaged households, including the poorest, over-aged, and children from predominantly Muslim backgrounds. The study has articulated the complex nature of school choice by highlighting the fact that deprivation factors remain the most important determinants of schooling choice. For the poorest and most disadvantaged children in the inner city, fee-free government schools tend to be the only choice, and inadequate supply threatens their participation in education unless they can access a low-fee private school.

Yet, the study shows that fee-free government school places in the study community were scarce, leading to new migrants being pushed to the margins of urban society where they

saw private schooling as their only option. However, private schools charged tuition fees that were prohibitive for the poor and were not necessarily of better quality. Some migrants had their children stay at home until a place became available in a government school. Others raised money to pay the prohibitive private school fees but often could not continue paying the fees. This led to some children starting school late, or starting, stopping, and re-joining school. In effect, these migrant households living in the inner city had no choice – they could not access the over-subscribed government schools and/or were priced out of fee-paying private schools.

An interesting issue that emerged is that no or lower maternal educational background was a factor in determining fee-paying school access. Mothers with nearly no education at all were more motivated to pay for their children to access private schools because they felt they offered better schooling opportunities and experiences than they had experienced as children. For them, enrolling their children in fee-paying private schools would give their children a better chance to climb the social mobility ladder. However, what these parents were actually buying was good classroom management arrangements. Some of these schools did not necessarily provide quality instruction and the overall schooling experience was not generally better than in government schools.

8.4.3 Conceptual

The study has shown that for inner city migrant groups, choosing a school is a dynamic process which changes as and when household conditions and factors change.

It has raised the importance of paying attention to schooling processes and social outcomes as a way of understanding school choice. While previous research has focused on inputs, effectiveness, and quality perceptions to understand the phenomenon of school choice (Akyeampong and Rolleston 2013; Dixon et al. 2013; Akaguri 2014, 2011; Ngware et al. 2010; Tooley and Dixon 2006, 2005b, 2007), this study suggests that school experiences indices such as ‘teaching/learning, classroom environment, overall schooling satisfaction, students’ attitude, technology use, how learning is evaluated’, and social outcomes defined as future career aspirations, also matter for school choice. The study has shown that while schooling processes and experiences might be difficult to capture and measure, they are important if we are to understand at a much deeper level how they contribute to informing parental decisions and choices. In particular, career aspirations influence inner-city migrants’ schooling choice. Having higher professional career

aspirations is an important reason why inner-city migrant households choose fee-paying schools.

8.4.4 Methodological

The study is also methodologically verifiable regarding how it explores the links between schooling choice/access, experiences, and aspirations among children in transition (from primary grade 6 to JHS and from JHS3 to Senior Secondary School). As motioned in chapter one, past studies on school choice in the developing world context focused on all primary and/or secondary school students. Thus, hitherto, children in transition's views on educational choice/access have been largely ignored. The study shows that the obvious decision overaged primary 6 or JHS3 students, especially boys, and their households might make is to drop out and move on to the next educational milestone. Yet, most of the school type research has not focused on this category of children exclusively. This study has shown that if the constraints leading to negative schooling experiences and aspirations are resolved, most migrant households will be better off.

By exclusively studying children in primary grade 6 and JHS3, the study has provided further methodological evidence on previously unobserved variables in the area of school type research by focusing on and analysing how children in transition access and experience schooling and aspire to their future career goals.

8.5 Implications and recommendations for policy

8.5.1 Implication and recommendation for education policy

The findings from this study have several implications for the basic education policies, especially regarding access to education, schooling experiences, and schooling aspirations for disadvantaged children. The data suggests that the current free, compulsory, basic education policy and funding is not translating into increased access and participation among disadvantaged groups. Recent evidence shows that low-fee private schools are playing a significant role in achieving the EFA goals despite the implementation of the FCUBE policy (Akyeampong and Rolleston, 2013; Akaguri, 2011a, b). The findings from this study suggest that promoting low-fee private schools in the global south would be disadvantageous for many households, especially those with overaged children and larger families as well as the poorest households, whose children are unlikely to attend fee-paying schools. It should be recognised that disadvantaged households cannot rely on private schools to realise their educational rights. It is not

enough to implement FCUBE when the rate of enrolment continues to increase without adequate financial arrangements to provide free access to every child.

The educational, economic, and financial reforms required of the Ghanaian government, if the sustainable development Goal4 regarding education is to be met, are considerable. Chapter three showed that the trends and projected costs of government education funding favoured the SHS level, which is now free for every child at the expense of the primary and JHS levels. This might create inequities as fewer disadvantaged children can progress to the higher levels of education. Additionally, a greater part of the education funding comes from international agencies who have accepted a major responsibility to assist and promote the implementation and improvement of the FCUBE programme. The findings of this study suggest that the FCUBE policy should be updated to address the implementation gaps in terms of providing good quality education and quality supervision of teachers. After all, the FCUBE policy is meant to allow disadvantaged households, who are not attractive to private schools, to have good schooling that can help them realise their educational goals. As Akyeampong et al. (2012) has noted, there are still access gaps for the most vulnerable and marginalised children. Therefore, in order to enable these categories of children to have a good foundation for human, social, and economic development, the policies must better address the support needs of vulnerable and marginalised households by increasing the supply of government school places in inner-city areas so poor households are not faced with the difficult decision of paying for private school places. The school feeding programmes should be extended to cover every disadvantaged child. Caning and other corporal punishment policies need to be monitored for children to engage fully in schooling, not be excluded from schooling, and persevere to achieve their future career goals.

The findings suggest that the FCUBE has been poorly implemented, given that many vulnerable and marginalised households are still depending on and accessing private schools, not by choice but by necessity. What this means in practice is that the Ministry of Education should be collecting, reporting, and tracking children's schooling access through to higher education. If a pattern emerges in that data suggesting, for instance, that certain groups of children are disproportionately not having positive schooling experiences and are therefore dropping out of school, then the government should be required through policies to implement support programmes to address those inequalities.

There should be consequences, such as demotion, for school districts that do not address persistent systemic failures, such as teacher absenteeism and inactivity in the classroom, that result in unequal learning experiences, aspirations, and other educational outcomes. These practices are insidious in the education system. Most education specialists are united regarding the importance of eliminating such practices as a means of delivering child-friendly education. Regarding the means of achieving child-seeking practices, it is also fairly widely agreed that teacher 'beliefs' on how children should be treated have generally been too great in comparison with the government policies made available to stop these practices. Teachers need to be reminded of the dangers associated with malpractices such as caning, and culprits should be prosecuted.

While the capitation grant and school feeding policies have provided increased access to the basic education level for disadvantaged households, increased enrolment is not enough. The study shows that access without positive schooling experiences will not make educational rights a reality for marginalised children. Too often, discussions about access to quality education ignore the fact that without positive schooling experiences, many children, especially those who are overaged, poor, or do not have natural aptitude for academic subjects, are unlikely to achieve their future career goals.

The international community has accepted a major responsibility to tackle the education crisis by ensuring that every child has access to quality education. However, the limitations of what gets measured need to be acknowledged. For example, chapter two has noted that many of the access indicators relate to enrolment numbers and examination pass rates, which invites questions as to what is valued. This invariably results in limited understanding of what constitutes schooling quality by national and international bodies which do not always appear convinced of the importance of measuring children's schooling experiences and aspirations, as discussed in this study. The World Bank's 'TEACH' initiative offers training for teachers to help enhance children's schooling experiences. However, how do we know whether these reforms have impacted children's schooling experiences? Reform changes must be accompanied by the implementation of measures whereby children, especially those in transition, can articulate how they experience the schooling processes in government and private schools in order to find out whether children are satisfied with, for example, the overall schooling experience. This might require at least one teacher-parent evening a year to discuss children's schooling progress.

Chapter seven showed that demand for fee-paying schools is predominantly driven by competition for higher professional credentials and social mobility. Private school is regarded as a positional good that provides access to social status and prestige. This is reflected in the growth in disadvantaged and poorer households increasingly choosing private schools driven by narrow considerations of examination performance and professional career goals (Lewin, 2017).

Further, it should not be assumed that the mere achievement of good examination results will simply allow children progress to higher education and lead to the achievement of career goals, which appears to be the belief enshrined in current education policy and development. The findings of this research indicate that lack of government schools, poverty, lack of opportunity, and precarious inner-city living might serve as barriers to education among inner-city households. It is clear from chapter two that private school access among inner-city households is not a new phenomenon. By 1957, during the implementation of the ADP, two of the private schools were already in existence to complement the three government schools in the area. The fourth government school (Islamic) was only established in 1986. There is still no government SHS in the area that can be accessed for free. While private schools are doing what they can to close the access gap, they are not operating in a way that promotes positive overall student schooling satisfaction and teaching/learning. As Lewin (2017:11) argues ‘fee-paying private schools undermine the right to free education of quality and ration equitable access by price’.

8.5.2 Policy Recommendations

The study has identified several recommendations that the Ministry of Education shoud consider. As the findings highlighted, many more disadvantaged families are accessing fee-paying schools due to lack of free government school places. However, the study shows that most private school teachers are untrained and therefore have limited pedagogical experience. Further, government school offered better schooling experiences as compared with their private counterparts. Carter et al. (2020:10) note that ‘unless the global effort shifts towards addressing the learning needs of disadvantaged children, achieving SDG4 will be highly unlikely’. Therefore, the study makes the following recommendations:

- The issues around equitable access requires urgent attention. The notion of disadvantaged families accessing fee-paying schools is well recognised by the

Ghana government and its Education Ministry. The government should strengthen its commitment to providing fee-free schools that impose no extra costs on households, especially, the poorest. These schools should be fit for purpose, maintained, and well equipped for quality schooling experiences. The study demonstrated that government schools are far better than low-fee private schools in terms of providing better overall student experience. However, there are not enough government schools in inner-city communities. Therefore, providing fee-free government school places for every child will ensure that they have a right to quality education. While fee-paying private schools appear to be closing the access gap in disadvantaged communities, they are unable to employ trained experienced teachers who can offer students with positive overall schooling satisfaction, including quality teaching/learning.

- The study found that, access to fee-paying school was associated with higher aspiration for professional careers. Children have different passions and talents, therefore, the government should pursue educational reform, such as the T-Level reforms implemented in the UK, to provide different educational pathways for different categories of children to meet their educational aspirations. This includes children with different learning needs and those who do not have natural aptitude for academic subjects. If implemented well, children with different learning needs and skills will be evaluated based on their strength and talent but not on their weakness of passing exams. Also, the Ministry of Education should strengthen and evaluate its policy that encourages well-trained, experienced, and motivated teachers to teach at the formative grades and provide them with supervision and support and reward achievement of improved experiences throughout the basic and secondary systems. However, this is dependent on political will and adequate financial resources.

- The Ministry of Education should provide better indicators for measuring progress in educational access and participation such that the achievement of the quantitative, qualitative, and equity dimensions of every child, especially, migrant households' can be spotted and acted upon. To this end, the EMIS data

should be redesigned to capture school processes variables (see chapter six) to inform programmes and training. This include provide child-seeking training and guidance for staff, especially head teachers and circuit supervisors, to ensure that teachers are not by any means contributing to unequal experiences of underserved children by caning. The danger of caning is that it may inadvertently violate children's rights to and in education, not only by causing vulnerable children to drop out, but also negatively impacting on their confidence. The child's freedom to articulate their best feelings and wishes may thus be supressed. Teachers' work should contribute to children's sense of satisfaction, belonging, and compassion, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond. A nationwide teacher re-training programme should be encouraged, designed, and implemented by the Ministry of Education to support the most disadvantaged households.

- The Ghana education's language policy allows teachers to use the local languages at the lower grades. The observation data revealed that, many teachers and migrant children do not speak the local languages they are supposed to teach and learn in. Their knowledge in the local language is far from enough to permit meaningful dialogue. The Ministry should consider an alternative means of helping teachers and children who do not speak the local language to cope in the short-term. For example, allowing teachers in the cosmopolitan areas to use the language spoken by most residents at the lower grades as a medium of instruction, although this could be problematic for some.
- The Ministry of Education should develop policies that directly hold district education authorities and schools accountable for addressing inequalities in children's schooling experiences, including teaching and learning processes, teaching and learning resources, evaluation of the learning process, classroom experiences, children's attitudes, and progression through the education system. This requires schools and teachers to review lesson notes and delivery to ensure that lessons reflect a diversity of voices and use methods that promote collaborative working, thinking creatively, communicating effectively, and good teacher/student relationships that promote good child behaviour and success. The study found that there is currently a robust code of conduct for teachers, so there may be cause for some optimism about the responsibility of

teachers to reflect, debate, and review these policies, which may be supported by appropriate career development training.

- Social Welfare departments should be adequately funded by the government in order to develop programmes which provide greater support for disadvantaged children, including the provision of free lunches and academic and emotional support, which are accessible to identified groups, such as the poorest, overaged children, boys, and children with disability who attend government or private schools. The education system should also share data with the Ministry of social services department, although data protection could be problematic.

8.6 Implications and recommendations for education practice

8.6.1 Implications for education practice

The findings of this study's argument in favour of continued evaluation of schooling experiences in the development of children's capability and social justice are compelling. If every child is to have access to quality education that meets their future aspirations, then it is important that they have quality and equitable access to good schooling experiences that can help to meet their future aspirations. The first aspect of such experiences is the guidance on how to ensure that students are satisfied with schooling. Teachers are role models to the children under their care. They may understand the importance of teaching children while they are in school, but as the study noted, teacher behaviour, such as canning might negatively affect children's school attendance. Using a child-friendly/child-centred approach in class would help children to develop interest in going to school regularly and have the freedom/confidence to learn.

The second is the teaching and learning process. Teachers need to use a variety of teaching methods in class. For example, group work and discussions which provide opportunities for children to solve problems together. Once teachers understand the principle behind groupwork, they will be able to better guide children to have groups that function well. The problem is that, many government and private school classrooms are overpopulated due to the large class sizes. Although the findings of chapter 6 indicated that while government schoolteachers are better in terms of the teaching and learning process, they could do well to manage their class and teach while they are in the classroom.

Thirdly, the study shows that there are several factors that have impact on schooling access. They include overage and livelihood patterns especially those that involve migration, poverty, and the inner-city environment itself. The achievement of the SDG4 depends on the improvement of the schooling experiences for these marginalised groups.

Education and development professionals should question and put a human face to the inequalities within society, not contribute to widening the existing inequalities further by not calling them out. The way we confront these inequalities will have implications for basic education practices, and development, as well as for making justice a reality for marginalised children.

8.6.2 Recommendations for education practice

This section presents some recommendations for education practice, especially, in marginalised communities. They include:

- The Ministry of Education should hold teachers accountable for addressing inequalities in children's schooling experiences, including managing the classrooms better, especially, government schools. This requires setting high standards of classroom and pedagogical practices for teachers so, children could be happy at school, develop, and progress through the education system. However, the education funding system gives a greater cause for concern. This is in relation to the issue of circuit supervisors not very well resourced to do their job properly. However, the Ministry of Education is funded by foreign loans. This overdependence on foreign loans should be discouraged. However, the current tax system is very weak in targeting rich businessmen. Private sector businesses should be taxed appropriately so that part of the money will be invested in education.
- Teachers should dispel assumptions and develop understanding and more support for overaged children and boys who are significantly disadvantaged and might be at risk of dropping out of school. Therefore, teachers need to find a way of connecting with children rather than disrespecting them. This is linked with not setting high expectation for children, especially those that are overaged and live in inner-city communities. This might further exclude these at-risk children. Teachers' negative beliefs must be challenged so that such beliefs are not passed down to future generations, because children today will be teachers tomorrow.

- The government should strengthen the systems that monitor teacher attendance and performance. A first step is to ensure that headteachers' authority is not undermined by the Ministry of Education officials through favouritism. For this reason, teacher attendance records could be collected by headteachers/circuit supervisors and held electronically at the District level. Regular analysis and reviews of these records will help to identify bad teachers and practices, such as absenteeism, canning, and not teaching while in class, that put children at risk of achieving quality education.

- The study shows that households' individual and socio-economic background were not associated with schooling aspirations, indicating that schooling is perceived as universally useful for the achievement of future career goals, regardless of their socio-economic background or academic record. Although socio-economic background and inner-city living were associated with greater uncertainty in schooling aspirations. Nevertheless, the ideas, images, and expectations children encounter at school and home are likely to connect to aspirations. Teachers have an important role in levelling the playing field to one in which the opportunities brought by access and participation in school are open to and taken up by every child irrespective of their background. It would seem key for teachers to target factors such as groupwork, roleplay, presentation, making teaching interesting, and setting high expectation, which influence children's ability to imagine a future for themselves through schooling, and begin to do so at the basic level.

What follows is are personal reflections on what I have achieved through writing this thesis.

8.7 Personal reflections

The study has shown that government schools provide better overall schooling satisfaction and teaching/learning experience for children than their private counterparts. Therefore, if government school access is inadequate, the government is encouraged to make the improvements necessary to support access to education among disadvantaged households. This includes building schools in deprived communities to offer free places at various levels of education.

Currently, the Ghanaian government provides free access to every child at the SHS level, which runs on a shift system where a section of the students attend school at a given time while others patiently wait for their turn. The argument in favour of the shift system because it reduces costs is strong, but the implementation of such a system, especially in inner-city communities, might be problematic. This reform raises the question of whether the implementation of free SHS is aimed at improving the educational standards of disadvantaged groups or meeting political goals and ambitions. Ghana is by no means a stranger to education policy reforms. Chapter two highlighted key enrolment drives after independence which led to increased enrolment. However, chapter three indicated that one of the reasons why enrolment was not maintained was precisely that there were inadequate places in government schools for every child to attend for free. Another reason was that children and parents tended to be dissatisfied with the quality of education that government schools offered. In fact, the findings in chapter seven are consistent with the unprecedented mushrooming of private schools in deprived areas where children perceive that private school access will offer them a route to a professional career. Government schools need to position themselves better to change their image, as the study clearly suggests that teaching and overall schooling satisfaction were better in government schools. It is therefore the responsibility of development agencies, academics, and governments to contribute to research that examines the differences that exist between government and private schooling access, experiences, and aspirations among disadvantaged communities. Drawing on my personal experiences in teaching, research, politics, and campaigning, I want to challenge the inequities in educational access among disadvantaged households. The achievement of SDG4 can become a reality only when improvements are made at the margins of society.

8.8 Limitations of the study

One major limitation of the study surrounds the restricted participation and coverage of all the private schools in the area, in addition to the four government schools studied. The reason for this was twofold. First, a few private school head teachers wanted a monitory reward for their participation in the research, which was clearly unethical as far as the research guidelines were concerned. Second, I wanted to interview students to gauge their understanding of how they experience school. However, I was unable to do so as fathers dominated the interviews and drowned out the voices of mothers in cases where both parents were present at the pilot stage. Nevertheless, students' survey data and different

stakeholders' views offered a broader analysis that enabled comparison of the two school management types, as well as of different individual and household characteristics.

The last major limitation relates to the number of students surveyed. I was unable to survey all the children in the eight schools due to limited resources and time, and the fact that I had no funding for the research. This notwithstanding, collecting data from students in transition in hindsight offered an innovative way of gaining insights into potential learning gaps in schooling outcomes for children in transition. It also enabled me to purposively collect data from government and private school students to examine schooling access, experiences, and aspiration models, and to control for a range of variables typically unobserved by other researchers. However, it is important to stress that I did not include costs in my models. Future research needs to include the relative costs of government and private school access for households with different backgrounds.

8.9 Recommendations for further research

Ghanaian governments over the past two decades have accepted and implemented major useful educational policies, such as the fee-free policy in all government basic schools which has improved access. However, meaningful and timely progress among disadvantaged households is still a challenge (Akyeampong, 2012; Rolleston, 2009). For example, Rolleston (2009) has noted that there are limitations inherent in the school system in supporting the foundations required for human flourishing and economic development. As such, future research needs to focus on factors that contribute to inequity on one hand, and the apparent limitations inherent in government and private school systems on the other. Moreover, to draw more informed conclusions about the relative differences between government and private schools, future research needs to incorporate an analysis of cost.

8.10 Conclusion

This study has provided useful insights into the schooling choices of inner-city households in Ghana by demonstrating that inner-city households face several education challenges which might negatively impact on the achievement of the UN SDGs.

First, evidence from the inner-city community presented in chapter five showed that low-fee private schools were not accessible to certain groups and households. Children from lower socio-economic backgrounds who enrolled in low-fee private schools were unable to sustain fee payments so had to leave when a place became available in a government

school. Injustices associated with family background and children's individual characteristics were also deeply embedded in inner-city households' schooling choices.

Second, the government school system reaches the most disadvantaged children in the inner-city community who are of little commercial interest to private proprietors. In this sense, private schools are unlikely to fill the access gaps in disadvantaged communities.

Third, the study also found that the perception that private schools are better than government schools, at least when schooling experiences indices were compared, was not supported by the evidence (chapter six). Government schools outperformed their private counterparts on the teaching/learning and the overall schooling experiences indices, demonstrating that government school access leads to relevant and effective teaching/learning, as well as satisfaction. This means that the opportunity cost of encouraging fee-paying schools in disadvantaged communities to fill access gaps is substantial.

Fourth, children from both government and private schools have high schooling aspirations and felt schooling would help them realise these aspirations. However, injustices arise from the barriers associated with these aspirations for children from both school management types on the basis of peer pressure, lack of opportunities, poverty, and the 'harsh' reality of living in an inner-city environment. In many cases, these injustices towards migrant households' education aspirations compound existing inequalities based on enduring cultural factors.

The above arguments make a strong case for government investment in school places in disadvantaged communities in order to achieve the UN SDG goals regarding people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships. The SDGs are commendable in many ways, as they seek to overcome certain kinds of injustices and inequalities inherent in society. However, the way the SDGs are implemented in the Global South is unintentionally creating several new forms of persistent injustice, as well as reinforcing some of the injustices they seek to eliminate.

Looking at the problems of access and choice in an inner-city community both advances and responds to the call to address the educational access needs of the urban poor, as much of this area of research has focused on the rural poor. Most importantly, this research has extended our understanding of the challenges urban migrants face as they navigate the education system. The study also calls on the government to dwell more on

their obligation to translate disadvantaged households' rights to education into capabilities/realities.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Student Survey

Quality of Teaching and Learning

Respondent: Pupil/Student

Age: ..... Gender: ..... Class: .....

District: .....

Religion: .....

Type of School: Public: ..... Private: ..... (Please tick).

1. Pupil/Student Satisfaction

Please read each of the following statements and circle the number that best represents your level of satisfaction. **0** means no satisfaction, while **5** is the highest satisfaction.

1.	Do you feel that teachers are friendly?	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Do you like the way your teachers teach in class?	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Do you think school helps you to learn?	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Do you think your teachers have adequate teaching materials?	0	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Do you like to go to school?	0	1	2	3	4	5

2. Educational interaction.

Please answer the following questions:

A. Family Environment

1. Which is the highest level of education achieved by your father?

Never enrolled	**Primary**	**Middle/JSS**	**Secondary**	**Higher**

2. Which is the highest level of education achieved by your mother?

Never enrolled	**Primary**	**Middle/JSS**	**Secondary**	**Higher**

3. How many brothers do you have? .....

4. How many sisters do you have? .....

5. How many people live in the same home as you? (Other tenants included if any).....

6. Do your parents have a radio in the home? Yes/No (please circle).

7. Do your parents have a TV in the home? Yes/No (please circle).

8. Do you work after school? (e.g. Farming, fishing, petty trading, baby sitting). Yes/No (please circle).

If yes, what time of the day do you work? Morning/Afternoon/Evening/Night (Please circle).

9. Does your teacher organize extra/remedial classes for you after school? Yes/No (please circle).

10. Do your parents pay for these extra/remedial classes? Yes/No (please circle).

B. Teaching and Learning Process

Please listen to each of the following statements. Circle one of the numbers that represents how frequent the activity in the statement is conducted. **0** means never, **2** means sometimes, **3** means often, **4** means very often, and **5** means always. Please circle.

1.	Do your teachers always organise group/individual activities for you in class?	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Do you always have group discussions or role play in the class?	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Do you always have access to supplementary readers in your school	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Do your teachers always spend class time on activities of their own?	0	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Do you help other pupils by child-to-child learning?	0	1	2	3	4	5

C. Level of technology Use

1.	In the teaching-learning process teachers always use chalkboard	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.	In the teaching-learning process teachers always use instructional materials, e.g. maps, globes, photos.	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.	In the teaching-learning process teachers always use equipment e.g. radio, tape recorder.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.	In the teaching-learning process textbooks are used	0	1	2	3	4	5
5.	In the teaching-learning process, library books are used	0	1	2	3	4	5

D. Evaluating the Learning Process

1.	Do teachers always give you multiple-choice questions?	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Do teachers always let you write compositions?	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Do teachers always make you conduct oral presentation?	0	1	2	3	4	5

4.	Do teachers always give you advice on your performance?	0	1	2	3	4	5

E. Classroom Climate/Experiences

1.	Do your teachers always set high expectations for your progress?	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Do you always participate in the making of classroom rules?	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Do you and your teacher always talk freely about personal and, academic problems?	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Do your teachers always encourage you to develop new ideas?	0	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Do your teachers always have to deal with behavioural problems such as cheating, truancy, fighting?	0	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Are you always happy to come to the classroom?	0	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Are instructional activities always interesting?	0	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Is your classroom always free from noisy disturbances such as sound of engines/machines, road noise, market sounds etc.?	0	1	2	3	4	5

F. Pupil/Student Attitude

1.	Do you always study on your own?	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Do you always try not to miss classes because of the importance of what is taught?	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Do you always complete homework given by teachers?	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Do you always respect your teachers?	0	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Do you always respect your community? i.e. picking up rubbish, helping others.	0	1	2	3	4	5

G. Parent-Children interaction

1.	Do your parents always prepare all needed conditions for you to learn in?	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Do your parents always help in solving your learning difficulties	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Do you parents always pay attention to your study activities at school?	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Do your parents always praise you when you do well at school	0	1	2	3	4	5

6. How do you want your parents to help and support you further in your learning?

a._____

_____

b._____

_____

c._____

_____

F. Aspirations and Expectations

1. What do you want to become when you leave school? .....

2. Why do you want to become what you have written in question one above?

3. What do you think will prevent you from achieving this goal?

4. What do you think are the benefits of achieving this goal?

5. What will you do to achieve this goal/dream?

Appendix 2 Teacher survey questionnaire

Respondents: The Head Teacher and the Teachers

Gender..... Age.....

Type of school - Public/Private/Partnership

Name of school: .....

Teaching:

Teacher Satisfaction

Read each of the following statements and choose a number that best represents your level of satisfaction. **5 is the highest satisfaction while 0 means no satisfaction.**

1. Teachers prefer teaching to any profession	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2.Teachers are recognised by parents	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3**.** Teachers are recognised by head teacher	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
4. Teachers are respected by pupils	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
5. Teachers are satisfied with attitudes shown by pupils in school	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6. Teachers are satisfied with the school rules	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
7. Teachers are satisfied with colleagues professional capabilities	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
8. Teachers are satisfied with the support from SMCs and PTAs.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
9. Teachers are satisfied with the support from the District Education Office.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
10. Teachers are satisfied with school environment	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
11. Teachers are always satisfied with parents' call for PTA meetings	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Education Interactional

Read each of the following statements and choose (circle) one of the numbers that best represents how frequent the said activity occurs. **0** means never, **1** means seldom, **2** means sometimes, **3** means often, **4** means very often, **5** means always.

Participation in decision-making:

1. All teachers are involved in making policies and planning school programmes	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2. School staff always participate in meetings by asking questions, sharing information, clarify issues and expressing disagreement	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3. Individual staff including the head teacher always make programme decisions without having to seek approval from higher level of bureaucracy	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
4. Appraisal of school head teacher, teachers, staff, pupils and programmes are always conducted by appropriate representatives	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

5. In general, would you say the level of teacher participation in decision-making in your school is **Low** or **High?** Please circle.

Please provide your reasons below

6. Please provide any suggestions that could improve the level of Teacher participation in decision-making.

Teaching - Learning Process

1. Teachers always use non-teaching approaches such as pupils' active learning in the teaching – learning process	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Pupils' always engage in teaching-learning activities such as discussions, role playing and group problem solving in the classroom	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Pupils and teachers do not always spend the class time on activities outside the mainstream of the lesson	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. People always help other pupils by child-to-child learning	0	1	2	3	4	5

5. In general, how would you rate the quality of the teaching-learning process in your school? Low..... Or High..... (Please circle)

6. Please give reasons of why you circle Low or High below:

7. Please provide any suggestions for improving the quality of Teaching and Learning in your school below.

Level of Technology used

1. Teachers always use the chalkboard in the teaching-learning process	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. In the teaching-learning process teachers always use non-projected materials such as maps, globes, photos, etc.	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.In the teaching-learning process, teachers always use electronic equipments such as computers, radios, tape recorders and video tapes	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.Textbooks are always used in the teaching-learning process	0	1	2	3	4	5
5.Each child has their own textbook in the teaching-learning process	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. Library books are always used in the teaching-learning process	0	1	2	3	4	5

7. In general, teachers in my school always use a variety of materials. Yes or No? Please circle

8. Please give reasons of why you chose yes or no.

9. Please provide practical suggestions for improving the frequency of the use of technology in your school

Planning and preparation for teaching and learning process

1. Each teacher always prepares detailed lesson plans that include the objectives and the intended outcome and expands scheme of work	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Head teacher always distributes syllabus to teachers	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Teachers always work in groups to develop selected teaching aids such as models and charts in their lesson plans.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Individual teachers always develop lessons, tests, and instructional material as part of their lesson planning	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Teachers always use outside resources such as parents and other professionals in helping to plan lessons	0	1	2	3	4	5

6. Teachers in my school always prepare for their lessons. Yes or No? (Please circle)

7. Please give your reasons below:

8. How can teachers be assisted to prepare better for their lessons?

Evaluating the pupil learning process

1. Multiple choice tests are always used in evaluating pupils' achievement.	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Teachers always use oral presentation by pupils to assess pupils' achievement	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Evaluation of essays and written reports are always used in assessing pupils' progress	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Teachers always provide feedback to individual pupils on academic achievement.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Pupils always demonstrate skills and knowledge through real world problem solving	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. Teachers always use checklists for measuring attitudes and behaviour, such as manners, social norms and pupils' leadership.	0	1	2	3	4	5

7. In general, how would you rate the evaluation of pupil learning process in your school? Excellent ..... Poor..... (Please tick).

8. Please give your reason below:

9. If the evaluation process is poor, what do you think should be done to improve it?

Classroom Environment/Culture

1. Teachers always set high expectations for pupils' progress	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2. Pupils always take part in making decisions about classroom rules	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3. Pupils and teachers always talk freely about such things as personal and academic problems	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
4. Teachers always encourage pupils to develop new interests and new ideas	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
5. Teachers are always able to handle pupils' behavioural problems very well	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6. Teachers always look forward to coming to the classroom	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
7. Pupils are always eager to come to the classroom	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
8. Instructional activities are always well interesting to pupils	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
9. Classrooms are always free from noisy disturbances such as that of the market and road noise	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

10. How would you assess the classroom environment in your school? Excellent…… or Poor…… (please tick)?

11. Please give reasons for your answer below:

12. What do you think should be done to improve the situation?

School Environment

1. The head teacher always inspires a shared vision among staff	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2. The head teacher always empowers the staff to make decisions on their own	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3. The head teacher always empower the teachers to discipline pupils when necessary	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
4. The head teacher always sets high expectations for teacher performance	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
5. Accountability (responsibility for school performance) is always shared among the school staff	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6. Everyone in the school always follows school rules and regulations	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
7. School problems are always solved quickly and completely	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
8. Teachers always look forward to coming to school	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
9. Pupils are always eager to come to school	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
10. The school always has incentive package for teachers such as housing, recognition allowance, end-of-year entertainments, awards etc.	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

11. In general, how would you assess your school environment? Excellent/Poor (Please circle).

12. Please give your reasons below

13. Please give any suggestions that would improve the school environment in the box below.

Appendix 3 Interview guide

These are the research questions that guided the semi-structured interviews.

Parents/guardian - details of migration and residence

Would you please tell me a bit about yourself, your family, and your child's school?

You said you have not lived in the city all your life, where did you use to live?

Can you tell me what made you move to Accra?

While in Accra, have you always lived in the same area?

How does that area compare to where you are living now?

How do you compare life in Accra to where you migrated from?

Why did you move to Accra?

While in Accra, why did you move from your initial residence to your current residence?

Conditions of daily living in the community. Example:

What difficulties do you associate with living in this community?

What do you (and your spouse) and your children normally engage in during the day?

What problems do you face while carrying out your normal duties?

Are there problems associated with services and or physical infrastructure? Do you face social problems?

School preferences, likes, dislike:

You told me you like ..... about your child's school, are there any reasons why you think these are the most important things about your child's school?

Is there anything you dislike about the school? Why do you consider these as what you dislike about the school?

Were there any schools you could have considered choosing? Are there any differences between the different types of schools?

School Decisions:

Why did you send your child to private/public school? What do you think are the benefits of sending your children to school?

Do your children receive private/extra tuition? If so, why? If not, why? What do you think the benefits of private/extra tuition are? Without private/extra tuition, do you think these benefits will be achieved?

Are there any problems associated with not having private tuition/extra tuition? Where do your children get the extra or private tuition? Do you pay for such tuition? How much money do you pay per week? Is there private tuition available in your child's school?

Did you say your child dropped out of school at class .....? Was that the decision of the

family? Who decided? Was the child truanting or attending irregularly before finally dropping out?

Aspirations and expectations:

Can you tell me about what your aspirations and expectations are for your children? You said you aspire for/expect your children to..... Do you think these are possible to happen? What do you think may be the barriers to these happening? Will this affect whether or not your child stays in school or leaves school?

What do you think are the benefits of your child going to school? How could school help in obtaining these benefits? Are these benefits important?

Children's Interview:

Is there anything you like about school? Is there anything you dislike about school?

How do you think your life would be if you drop out of school?

How do you think your life would be if you stay(ed) in school longer?

How do you think schooling will enhance your future life? Do you think schooling will make a difference to your future work? What about other aspects apart from work?

What do you want to become when you get older? You said you would like to become..... why? Would you like to become like your mother/father? Why not? What makes you think you're likely to become what you aspire/expect to be?

Does this make you more likely to stay in school longer, drop out or leave school early?

Are there any other jobs you think are better than the one you aspire to be? Why are you not aspiring to those? Do you think schooling will help you get into those jobs?

Appendix 4 Observation Protocol for classroom observations

Teacher professional values and attitudes, Knowledge, Practice	**Evidenced**
Professionalism/ knowledge: Whether teacher is trained, knows what children should have previously learnt, how to support learning for vulnerable children to attain expected curriculum outcome, identifies what learners need to work on, teachers should not be strictly teaching to the test., attendance, punctuality, encourage parents to support their children and help with homework,	• Observation of lessons. • Clarifications with teachers.
Knowledge of curriculum: Teachers' knowledge goes beyond what is in the textbook, articulates high standards of literacy and correct use of oral and written language, teacher knows a wide range organising learning, teacher is creative in their teaching, children are challenged, fully engaged, and stimulated, teacher uses and displays good knowledge of phonology, pictures and learning materials on walls, teachers awareness of vulnerabilities that lead to drop-out such as school or levy non-payments	• **Observation of teaching** • **Observation and listening to students' responses**

Teacher withholds any form of corporal punishments or threatening behaviour, children enjoy learning, smile and learn. Children are not punished for getting answers wrong, ensures children gets access to food and water, and toil so children can learn.	
Managing the learning environment: **Manages behaviour and learning with small and large classes** Teacher is friendly, uses group and pair work to overcome challenges of large classroom,	• **Classroom observation**
Teaching and Learning: Employs a variety of instructional strategies that encourage learner participation and critical thinking. Teacher uses whole class dialogue, encourages collaborative learning, promotes project/enquiry-based learning, field trips, role play. Notices when children are absent. Teachers re-present concepts if students do not grasp them.	• **Observation of teachers' physical layout of teaching materials and teaching.** • **Students' verbal responses**
Assessment: Integrates a variety of assessment modes into teaching to support learning Assessment modes such a verbal response and written included in daily teaching practice. Teacher gives formative feedback, group assignments, assesses students' understanding, ask for alternative interpretations. Encourage spelling of difficult words, teachers keep records of learners' assessment – both summative and formative, and ongoing,	**Classroom observation of lessons Chalkboard work**

students are aware of the progress they are making, how to improve, through written and verbal communications with parents. Teachers have high expectations for all students, work with colleagues to improve levels of learning and attainment. Teachers assess fairly, do not compare learners' marks.	

Appendix 5 Observation Schedule

Class observed	**Subject/Activity Observed**	**Number of observations**
Class one	**Phonics/Ga**	**3 each**
Class three	**Drawing/reading/Ga**	**2 each**
Class six	**Reading/comprehension/Maths**	**3 each**
JHS	**Social Science/Maths**	**3 each**

Appendix 6 Survey of School Administration data

1. Access and participation - Enrolment numbers in the school

Respondent: The Head teacher Male/Female Age (optional).....

Level of school: Pre-school/Primary/JSS (please delete as appropriate).

Name of school: .....

Type of school: Public/Private/Partnership (please delete as appropriate)

Please indicate by **grade** and **gender** the total number of pupils enrolled in your school in the school years 2005/2006 and 2013/2014 academic years.

Grade	**2005/2006**	**Male**	**Female**	**2013/2014**	**Male**	**Female**
KG 1						
KG 2						
P 1						
P 2						
P 3						
P 4						
P 5						
P 6						

JSS 1						
JSS 2						
JSS 3						
Total						

Please provide the information for **boys and girls** in your school during the school years 2**005/2006 and 2013/2014 who dropped out.**

Grade	**2005/06**	**Male**	**Female**	**2013/14**	**Male**	**Female**
P1						
P2						
P3						
P4						
P5						
P6						
Total						

What are the reasons given for school drop-out? .....

.....

.....

What is the average distance pupils' enrol in your school travel to school?

.....

.....

.....

Approximately, what percentage of pupils travel more than 3km to your school?

.....

What means do pupils' travel? .....

.....

The journey to school takes approximately how long? .....

In the school year 2013/14 what number of pupils not admitted nor enrolled in school due to lack of school uniform, lunch or levies respectively?

.....

.....

Approximately what numbers of children were not enrolled to start formal schooling in 2005/6 because the community does not perceive schooling as important?

.....

In the school year 2013/14 the number of pupils who were not enrolled in P 1 - 6 in school because the community does not perceive schooling important was.....

Please provide the number of pupils who entered and passed the BECE exams in the 2005/06, 2013/14 and 2014/15 academic years.

2005/06	Male	Female	2013/14	Male	Female	2014/15	Male	Female
Total								
Passed								
Failed								

2. Educational Resources

Administrative Support:

What is the highest education you have completed successfully? Please list the highest qualification received such as GCE O/L or A/L, SSCE, Cert A 4-year, Cert A Post Sec, Diploma etc.

What is your rank in the Ghana Education Service? Please state whether you are a teacher, Assistant Superintendent, Superintendent, Senior Superintendent, Principal Superintendent, or Assistant Director.

How many years have you been a school teacher?

When was your school last inspected?

How many times in a year is your school inspected for the following purposes?

School finance monitoring - Time/Year……

Teacher Observation - Time/Year……

School Management - Time/Year……

Physical Facilities monitoring - Time/Year……

After supervision/inspection did you receive any feedback from the officer concerning:

School Management - Yes/No

Teacher Performances - Yes/No

School Facilities - Yes/No

Discipline of pupils - Yes/No

School Environment - Yes/No

Other (please specify)

Did you receive any additional support after supervision/inspection? Yes/No
If yes, state the support provided.

If no why did you not get the support needed?

Please state the type of assistance provided for your school within the last three years and by whom?

Type of assistance	**Town Dev. C'ttee**	**Unit Committee**	**School Management Committee**	**Parent/Teacher Association**	**NGO of donor Agency**	**District Assembly**
Enrolment drive						
Building classrooms						
Supplying furniture						
Maintenance/repairs						
Sports/equipment						
Teaching/learning materials						
Staff accommodation						
Others (please specify)						

2.2 Information about teachers

Number of teachers by qualification

Type of training	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
Untrained			
Un-certified but trained			
Cert. A4-year			
Cert. A Post-Secondary			
Diploma			
Graduates			
Sub total			
Non - Teaching			
Grand - Total			

Number of teachers by Rank

Rank	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
Unranked teachers			
Assistant Superintendents			
Superintendents			
Senior Superintendents			
Principal Superintendents			
Assistant Directors			
Total			

Size of School

Class	**Number of Pupils**	**Number of streams**
P 1		
P 2		
P 3		
P 4		
P 5		
P 6		
Total		

Number of teachers.....

2.3 Information about facilities

Number of classrooms available.....

Number of classrooms in use.....

Additional classrooms required.....

Condition of Classroom:

Type of Classroom building	**Number Available**	**Good -No repairs required**	**Fair-Minor repairs required**	**Poor-Major repairs required**
Cement				
Mud Walls				
Sheds				
Open Air				
Pavilions with Walls				
Pavilions without Walls				
Total				

Condition of Urinals and toilets:

Description	**Available**	**Not Available**	**Good**	**Poor**
Boys Urinals				
Girls' urinals				
Staff Urinals				
Boys' Toilets				
Girls' Toilets				
Staff Toilets				

Water and electricity:

Is potable (drinkable) water available? Yes/No

Is the school wired for electricity? Yes/No

Does the school have electricity? Yes/No

School Compound:

Are there any problems with the following?

Problems	**Yes**	**No**
Drainage		
Erosion		
Sewerage		
Garbage disposal		

Furniture:

Description	**Number Available**	**Adequate**	**Inadequate**	**Number Needed (if inadequate)**
Pupils' Seating Places				
Pupils' Writing Places				
Teachers' Desks				
Teachers' Chairs				
Classroom Cupboards				

Teaching Materials:

Description	**Number Available**	**Adequate**	**Inadequate**	**Number Needed (if inadequate)**
Teaching Guides				
Chalk Boards				
Chalk Board Rulers				
Dusters				
Boxes of White Chalk				
Boxes of Coloured Chalk				
Audio Visual Aids				

Other facilities:

Facilities	**Available**	**Not Available**
Library Room		
Box Library		
Head teacher's Office		
General Office		
Store Room		
Staff Room		
Infirmary		
Sports/Play field/ground		
Garden/Farm		